TELOS

NUMBER 126 Winter 2003

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Christopher P. Long: ***On Aristotle***

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US: $12 ***Canada: $15***

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Subscription Rates

One-year Individual . . . $45.00 One-year Institutional $95.00
Two-years Individual . . . $90.00 Two-years Institutional. . . .$190.00
(Foreign Subscribers, including Canadian, add 15%)

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Telos number 126 corresponds to Vol. 33, No. 4. ***Telos*** is published in the Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter by Telos Press, Ltd. Periodicals postage paid at New York and additional mailing offices. Send address changes and inquiries to:

Telos
431 E. 12th Street, New York, NY 10009
© 2003, Telos Press Ltd. ISSN 0090-6514
Tel.: # 212-228-6479 Fax: # 212-228-6379 e-mail: telospress@aol.com
Website: www.telospress.com

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Postmodern Scholasticism: Critique of Postmodern Univocity

Catherine Pickstock

I

Is there a "postmodern" phase of history? If so, is it to be celebrated or regretted? If the modern is progressive, is the postmodern reactionary? The myth that there are irreversible cultural breaks through time has long since been refuted.[1] In tracing developments from the late Middle Ages to the early modern period, parts of late mediaeval theological thought can be seen as underpinning later "modern" ideas, while much of the Enlightenment may also be seen as a qualified reaction against these changes. The origins of modernity are often explained in terms of "the Enlightenment," and modernity in terms of the rise of the secular state needed to quell the religious wars — along with the rise of medical, educational and penal institutions. Since secular attempts to improve society by means of the state and the market have failed, a revised genealogy stressing the legacy of distorted religious developments could pave the way for more serious alternatives than those prefigured by liberal and postmodern critiques.

One can go further. Postmodernists have protested against one-dimensional notions of progress without a genuine *novum*, in the name of the diverse, the more than human, the incommensurable. In so doing, some of them (especially Gilles Deleuze, Alain Badiou and Jacques Derrida) have gone back to Duns Scotus for inspiration: to his levelling of the finite and the infinite to a univocal being, whose unleashing of the virtual and the

1. Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, tr. by Catherine Porter (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993)

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discontinuous prefigures a radical break with a totalizing rationalism.[2] It has also been claimed that these Scotist innovations paved the way for modernity. If so, how can they also contribute to a break with modernity? This calls for a re-examination of the origins of modernity.

Scotus' flattening out of necessity (an "aesthetically" necessary order given only in actual existence, not proceeding from logical possibilities) to virtuality, and of being to bare existence — both modern rationalist moves privileging epistemology over ontology — suggest a radicalization of the modern in a more anarchic direction. It renders all possibilities equally viable, and all existence merely phenomenal, lacking in depth and unrelated to either eternal truth or binding human values. It sees the post-modern as the "late modern," or as the intensification of certain trends of modernity. Thus, this return to Scotus and the late Middle Ages can be seen as part of a reconsideration of the very nature of modernity.

Modernity used to be defined in terms of the turn to the subject, the

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2. The significance of Scotus is not that he is the sole inaugurator of these developments, but that he is a crucial one in the general drift away from a metaphysics of participation (which he tended to reduce to external imitation rather than intrinsic "sharing in"). See Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et Répétition* (Paris: P.U.F., 1968); Richard Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus: the Scientific Context of a Theological Vision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), and *Duns Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Cross criticizes the interpretation of Scotus proposed here. Yet, despite all his objections, it is not so much that the two analyses of Scotus are at odds, but that they are articulated differently. See Richard Cross, "Where Angels Fear to Tread: Duns Scotus and Radical Orthodoxy," in *Antonianum*, Vol. LXXVI (2001), pp. 1-36, especially pp. 13-14, note 40. The interpretation of Scotus proposed here (especially in relation to Aquinas) is hardly controversial. See Étienne Gilson, *Jean Duns Scot: Introduction à ses Positions Fondamentales* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1952); Olivier Boulnois, "Quand Commence L'Ontothéologie? Aristote, Thomas d'Aquin et Duns Scot," in *Revue Thomiste*, Vol. LXCV, No. 1 (January-March, 1995), pp. 84-108; *Etre et Representation* (Paris: PUF, 1999) and *Duns Scot: sur la connaissance de Dieu et L'univocité de L'étant* (Paris: P.U.F., 1990); J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le Système de la Metaphysique* (Paris: P.U.F., 1990); Michel Corbin, *Le Chemin de la Théologie chez Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972); J.-Y. Lacoste, "Analogie," in *Dictionnaire Critique de Théologie*, ed. by J.-Y. Lacosteidem (Paris: P.U.F., 1998); Bruno Puntel, *Analogie und Geschichtlichkeit* (Fribourg: Herder, 1969); Gilbert Narcisse O. P., *Les Raisons de Dieu: Arguments de Convergence et esthétique théologique selon St Thomas d'Aquin et Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Fribourg: Herder, 1997); David B. Burrell, *Knowing the Unknowable God: Ibn-Sina, Maimonides, Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986); Mark D. Jordan, *Ordering Wisdom: The Hierarchy of Philosophical Discourses in Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), and *The Alleged Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1992); John Inglis, "Philosophical Autonomy and the Historiography of Medieval Philosophy," in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* Vol. 5, No. 1 (1997), pp. 21-53, and *Spheres of Philosophical Inquiry and the Historiography of Mediaeval Philosophy* (Boston: E. J Brill, 1998); and Hannes Möhle, *Ethik als Scientia Practica nach Johannes Duns Scotus, Eine philosophische Grundlegung* (Munster,1997).

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dominance of epistemology, and the legitimating of true knowledge by a reliable method. Etienne Gilson, Jean-Luc Marion, J.-F. Courtine and Olivier Boulnois have shown how both Cartesian and Kantian innovations depend on shifts within Latin scholasticism — so much so that both Descartes and Kant can still be regarded as "scholastics." These two thinkers did not simply drop unwarranted claims to know being as it really is in favor of an objectively critical reason, but attempted to define true knowledge and even being in terms of the unequivocally graspable and internally consistent. This shift from ontology to epistemology required a prior change in the understanding of being. Such a shift was impossible within the Greco-Arab and then Western Catholic synthesis of Aristotle and Neoplatonism. Within this synthesis, every abstraction of properties — such as "being," "truth," "good," or "entity" — from the real was still concerned with them *as* universals (as opposed to logical abstractions), while even abstraction was regarded as an elevation to that greater actuality and perfection typical of a more spiritual apprehension. The assumption was that their finite occurrence restricts the infinite being in which it participates. When knowledge grasps finitude in its relatively universal aspects, it does not simply mirror finitude, but fulfils its nature through an elevation of its reality.[3]

Knowledge as representation implies that abstraction is involved in all understanding in an entirely different fashion. Abstraction must not involve elevation, but a mimetic doubling. It is now essential to keep a transcendental universality distinct from spirituality; logical abstraction, from spiritual ascesis. For Scotus, being and other transcendental categories do not imply any perfective elevation.[4] Instead, like the infinite creator, finite creatures simply are, as opposed to not being. They are "the same," just as substance and accident, genus, species, and individuality all exist in the same fashion. Regarding specific qualitative differences, including difference between finite and infinite, and between transcendentals, on an abstact level there is no univocity, but only pure equivocity.[5] This provides a complex and subtle picture. As

3. Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* I d 8 q3 nn 50,86 and I d3 q3. See also Boulnois, *Duns Scot: sur le Connaissance*, *op. cit.*, p. 192n. and 193.3, p. 379. Boulnois, *Etre et représentation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 308-14 and 457-505.

4. Scotus came to this position through his interpretation of Pseudo-Dionysius and Augustine. His deployment of perfection terms as "common" both to God and creatures was anticipated by Bonaventure, and Avicennian metaphysics. See Alain de Libera, *La philosophie mèdièvale* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994), pp. 404-6; Alain de Libera and Maurice-Ruben Hayoun, *Averroës et l'averroësme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1991); Alain de Libera, *Penser au Moyen Age* (Paris: Seuil, 1991); Boulnois, *Etre et représentation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-327.

5. See, e.g., Scotus, *Ordinatio*, *op. cit.*, I d 3 q1 and d 8 q 3 nn, pp. 112-115.

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for the logical essence of *esse*, there is univocity between all its instances, while for ultimate differentiating qualitative properties there is equivocal diversity. Thus, although *esse* is univocal, in the fully determined instance there is always something over and above pure univocity that appears to be entirely "different." Yet, because differences are only instantiated among existing entities, Scotus claims that uncreated being and the ten *genera* of finitude are all included within being as univocal. Moreover, even the specific differences of finitude, the property of infinity, and the passions or transcendentals are "virtually" included within being as univocal. For Scotus, univocity is a "semantic" thesis regarding the constancy of meaning through diverse predications, resulting in a semanticization of ontology through his thesis of essential and virtual inclusion.[6] This implies that, as a semantic or logical unit, being is also a real, formal element of any existential reality. Although he does not distinguishes between being and essence, later Scotists did.

As Boulnois points out, when Scotus speaks of analogy, it reduces it either to the equivocal or to a matter of degrees.[7] Though Scotus allows that an infinite degree transcends the quantitative, this excess is once again conceived in an equivocal fashion.[8] He rejects the analogical as a third medium between identity and difference, because it does not seem to be rationally thinkable.[9] What remains is a semantic world sundered between the univocal and the equivocal. Scotus' inability to conceive of a semantic analogy within grammar and logic influences his metaphysics, since the granting of autonomy to the semantic is a metaphysical move: purely logical existence now belongs to the real and can always be "virtually distinguished" within its more complex concrete binding with other elements. Far from being rigorous, the idea that abstraction obtains within its own neutral quasi-ontological realm — virtuality independent of any ascent to the spiritual — it amounts to articulating only one possible hermeneutic option.

Since finite being is now acknowledged as given (even though it still requires an infinite cause), when it is abstracted from finitude it undergoes no elevation, but only isolates something formally empty — something that is no longer transcendental in the usual mediaeval sense of a universal category which applies to all beings, with or without material instantiation. For this reason, it now represents something that is simply there, although it must still be invoked in any representation and is, in this sense, transcendental. Here Scotus

6. *Ibid.*, I d 3, pp. 131-151.
7. Boulnois, *Etre et représentation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-1.
8. Scotus, *Ordinatio*, *op. cit.*, I d 3, pp. 358-60
9. Duns Scotus, *In Elench*, q 15 para [8] (22a-23a); *In Praed.* q 4 ¶ [5] (446b - 447a) and ¶ [6] (447a); see also Boulnois, *Etre et representation*, *op.cit.* pp. 246-7.

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echoes the Avicennian view that the subject of metaphysics is being and not the first principle, for "being" can now be regarded as transcendentally prior and "common to" both God and creatures.[10] In one sense, this introduces onto-theology. Thus, it is "modern," rather than "postmodern." In another sense, Scotus prefigures the possibility of being without God, and as more fundamental than the alternative of finite versus infinite or temporal versus eternal.

Something similar can be said of Scotus' impact on theology. As a "proto-modern" thinker, his contributions had implications for the alliance between theology and the "metaphysical." Within the prevailing theologico-metaphysical discourse of participated-in perfections, there was a ready continuity between reason and revelation: reason was drawn upwards by divine light, while, inversely, revelation involved the conjunction of radiant being and illuminated mind. Here, to rise to the Good, before as well as within faith, was to rise to God. Once the perceived relation between the transcendentals has undergone the previously discussed shift, to abstract to the Good no longer says anything concerning divine nature. To know the latter requires a positive revelation of something that has the impact of a contingent fact, rather than a metaphysical necessity.

One can interpret this as a modern misfortune. Already before Scotus, the business of "naming God" was beginning to change. This was a consequence of the Franciscans' aprioristic reading of Anselm, whereby perfection terms already start to denote abstraction, rather than elevation.[11] With Scotus, the mystical dimension is lost, and the Augustinian divine illumination of the intellect (in all human knowing) is reduced to the divine causal instigation of the natural light of the agent's intellect. This paved the way for the transition from Platonic recollection to modern apriorism.

Moreover, Scotus now claims that the *via negativa* only removes finite imperfections from a positively-known quality ("infinity"), deemed "convenient" for God, even in a more absolute sense than intellect, goodness, etc. This infinite void is really the Plotinian-tinged Avicennian infinite One, which Scotus considered to be "formally" preceding the divine qualitative perfections ("good," "true," etc.). This formally precede divine intellection. Then, to claim that Scotus retains some kind of apophaticism, is to miss the point.[12] For Dionysius, Augustine, and Aquinas, negativity

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10. Boulnois, *Etre et représentation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 327-405, and 457-93
11. Alain de Libera, *La philosophie médiévale*, *op. cit.*
12. In *Quodlibetal Questions* 5 a 3, Scotus speaks of these orderings as "quasi-emanations." It is this ontological priority of a positive infinite over any substantive qualities which seems to legitimate the use of the term "void."

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introduces a mysterious and yet palpable darkness, which still welcomes even when excluding.[13] For Scotus, on the other hand, it provides the positive presence of a fetishized infinite absence. This shift in the mystical component toward the absolutely empty delivers theology over to the Church hierarchy's authority, and, later, to that of scripture.[14]

Scotus can also be seen as anticipating postmodernity in theology. By foreclosing theological speculation, he demoted intellect in general and recast theology as charity. Thus, God's loving will is received by an answering will.[15] French historians waver between a reading of Scotus as surrendering Catholicism's mystical heart and as inaugurating a Pascalian charity. The Scotist distinction between the ethical goals of happiness and justice, linked to an obedient and well-meaning will, rather than to a beatified intellect, leads not only to Kant, but also to Marion's disinterested charity and unilateral gift.[16]

In the end, it becomes illogical, both in philosophy and theology, to uphold the "postmodern" against the "modern" Scotus. In other words, if one cannot countenance Scotist ontotheology, one must also question a "pure" philosophy concerned with a non-divine being, since this is ultimately grounded in univocity and the refusal of analogy. Likewise, if one is wary of the Scotist separation of abstraction from elevation, or, rather, his particular refusal of the mystical, one must also be wary of his semi-voluntarism. The very same sundering means that the divine intellect and will must be interpreted as univocally similar to their human counterpart. Such a predilection is reinforced by Scotus' Franciscan rejection of a distinction of the persons of the Trinity by substantive relations. This rejection is related to the Avicennian assumption that divine essence, and then intellect, and, later still, will, are "quasi-emanations" that precede the entire Trinity.

13. On illumination, see Scotus, *Ordinatio*, *op. cit.*, I d 3 q 3 a 5. On negation, see *ibid.*, I d 8 q 3 n49, and nn 70-86. On the formal distinction of divine perfections and divine intellect, see *ibid.*, I d 3 q 4. See also Boulnois, *Duns Scot . . .*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-81 and *Etre et représentation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 308-14 and 457-505.

14. Duns Scotus, *Quodlibetal Questions* 5 a 1. See George Tavard, *Holy Writ and Holy Church* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959).

15. Scotus, *Ordinatio*, *op. cit.*, I dist 8 pars I Q 4. See also Olivier Boulnois, "Duns Scotus: Jean" in Lacoste, ed., *Dictionnaire Critique de Théologie*, *op. cit.*

16. See Jean-Luc Marion, "Une époque de métaphysique," in *Jean Duns Scot ou la revolution subtile* (Paris: Editions Radio-France, 1982), pp. 62-72. In like fashion, Scotus' separation of revelation from mystical ascent points both to Barth's hermeneutics of the pure word of God, and Marion's phenomenology of the revealed word. Both seem to be linked to a loss of the mediating vision of analogy, even though, contradictorily, Marion's defence of the Dionysian *via antiqua* against the Scotist inauguration of ontotheology seems to require the *via antiqua* alliance of revelation and metaphysics in the broader sense, and a more emphatic sense of analogy and participation.

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This rules out the idea that the *Verbum* "is" simply an original aspect of the divine intellect in conjunction with the *Donum*, which in turn "is" simply an original aspect of the divine will. Thus, Scotus sees the *Verbum* as simply "declaring" an understanding present in the Father as Father, in principle not requiring any generation in order to be understanding. Likewise with the Holy Spirit in relation to paternal and filial volition. This is inevitable, because if essence, intellect, and will are all prior to the Trinity, and formally separate from it, then all three are essentially non-relational.

But if relation has no root in divine essence, then the persons which spring from divine essence, understanding and will, cannot have their identity in relation. Instead, they require some prior principles to ground their distinctive personhood. For Scotus, such principles are found in originating essence, intellect, and will. Here, the divine intellect can only be intellectual if it represents something preceding it: since what it represents is divine perfections (in contrast to the absolute simplicity of the divine infinite essence, which can only be represented *as* perfect), the latter are formally distinct from divine intellect as well as divine essence. Because the intellect is compelled by the perfections, it is a natural response, and the *Verbum* is said to proceed *per natura.* This compulsion is formally independent of the will, and this inaugurates a separation, in Scotus, of judgement and teleology. Concomitantly, here the divine will is somehow wrenched away from the inner lure of desire, and the the Spirit's procession is grounded in a pure non-natural and arbitrary procession *per voluntatem.*

Without recourse to substantive relation in identifying the persons of the Trinity, the attribution of intellect to the Son and will to the Spirit ceases to be a remote analogical naming — since pure relationality cannot really be grasped — and becomes the means of literal distinction. The Son proceeds *per natura* (in declaring, as words do thought, the Father's ineluctable representations), but the Spirit *per voluntas*. In this way, God is psychologized in an unequivocal fashion foreign to Augustine — yet scarcely because of western "perversions," since neither substantive relation nor the *filioque* is anywhere in sight. Indeed, a reading of Scotus suggests that none of the typical text-book categorizations of the history of Trinitarian doctrine is valid. Thus, Scotus has a strong doctrine of the paternal *monarchia* as prior to generation and spiration, *because* he also has a strong view of the divine *essentia* as characterizing Godhead, rather than Trinitarian relations. Such a view is not found in Augustine and Aquinas, who have weak (but sufficient) accounts of the *monarchia*. The oft-trumpeted Franciscan alternatives in Trinitarian theology result from the subordination of the

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Christian Trinity to a Neoplatonic trinity lurking in ontological shadows.

The Scotist mode of distinguishing persons by the natural/voluntary contrast ensures that will comes across as a movement of pure spontaneity outside the heteronomy of the laws of motion (according to Aristotle, a movement is always from another) and independent of the intellect.[17] If the latter now represents a neutral being, without evaluation, then, concomitantly, will begins its career of the pure positing of values without foundation. This is at once the inauguration of pure piety and pure irresponsibility. The issue then has nothing to do with a contrast between the modern and the postmodern. Rather, both represent "a certain Middle Age" (with roots reaching back before Scotus, to his Franciscan forebears and Avicenna) within which today's culture still operates, and whose assumptions should at least be re-examined.

Moreover, the postmodern aspect of Scotism is not even the most fundamental. This is too one-sided and simplistic. The reign of representation (or epistemology) assumes univocity of being, but the latter assumes representation. In reality, one cannot establish priorities, either in logic or in historical fact; not in logic, because while representation assumes the formality of abstraction which univocity guarantees, this univocal formality is only established when it is assumed that the mind's ability to abstract something common mirrors something in the real, rather than *doing* something to the real. Not in historical fact, because the moves toward univocity were permitted by the Avicennian and then Franciscan doctrine that there can be many substantive forms within the entity, rather than merely subordinate forms integrated under one overriding form, as for Aristotle. This comes about because new ontological weight is accorded to the mind's ability to isolate and abstract different elements — the source of the Scotist "formal distinction." In addition, Boulnois has shown how Roger Bacon's reception of Arab optics encouraged the view that physical realities are generated through an exact imaging or copying of prototypes, in a fashion that tends to reduce the Arabic stress on *convenientia* — or ineffable aesthetic rapport of all beings to each other (a theme continued by Aquinas) to exactly measurable proportion and equivalence.[18] This account of optics then tended to encourage Roger Bacon's account of the linguistic sign either as assisting a mental copying of something real or imagined, or as arbitrarily invoking an ontic equivalent in algebraic fashion without the mediation of reflective understanding. Such a perspective tended to undo

17. See Boulnois, *Etre et représentation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-114. Scotus, *Ordinatio*, *op. cit.*, d 3 q 3 a 4. See also Scotus, *Quodlibetal Questions*, *op. cit.*, q1 a 3 ; q 2 a 2; q 3 a2; 5 a 3.

18. Boulnois, *Etre et représentation*, pp. 55 –107.

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the Aristotelian view of knowledge as "realizing" spiritually a materialized form. This shift is sustained through Scotus up to William of Ockham.

The representation paradigm had another source, equally or even more fundamental — one related to the *divine* intellect. Scotus shifts notions of divine understanding away from simple identity with essence, and, consequently, away from the idea of its being archetypal art — a supreme maker's knowledge — rather than a kind of self-mirroring. For Scotus, divine ideas of divine perfections only arise as representations of perfections that in some sense precede cognition. Just as for Aquinas, finite knowledge by identity (the species of a thing being realized in the understanding) is grounded in the supreme divine identity. Finite knowledge by representation is grounded in divine self-representation. In this fashion, during the Middle Ages realism gradually gave way to empiricism, scepticism and even idealism[19]

The gradual shift to representation also tended to blur the distinction between logical predication and real invocation. Thus, logic and semantics began to dominate metaphysics. This process began in Avicenna for whom logic deals with universals, physics with particulars, and metaphysics with essences indifferent either to universals or particulars. This turns metaphysics into a doctrine dealing with inherently abstract entities hovering in a no man's land between the logical and the real, the mental and the actual. This suggests a further logic of what is not necessarily universal, and metaphysics is placed on its Kantian course with a "transcendental logic."[20] In other words, Scotus encouraged the tendency to logicize and semanticize metaphysics. Before him, being was usually considered to be univocal within logic, equivocal within physics, and analogical within metaphysics. Aquinas' theological analogy did subtly play between metaphysical and logical analogy, where the former denotes a real ineffable sharing in one principle through *convenientia* by two other realities (as substance and accident share in being), and the latter denotes a mysterious link strictly in terms of semantic priority with no necessary foundation in the real. For Aquinas, in theology, the metaphysical aspect preserves real affinity, while the logical one preserves mystery: how is God good? Yet,

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-107, 405-453. Cross speaks of Scotus's epistemic theory as if it just followed common sense. However, once again he equivocates: at times Aquinas also is supposed to have a representational theory of knowledge (p. 53), yet finally Cross concedes that Scotus innovates in shifting to *esse repraesentivum* as the basis for knoweldge, and that this inaugurates a modern epoch in thought about thinking.

20. Perhaps Kant — the pre-eminent "modern" — also remained with "a certain Middle Age." See Möhle, *op. cit.*; and Gilson, *Jean Duns Scot*, *op. cit.*

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the ontological assumption is that God is pre-eminently good.

Thus, Aquinas begins to qualify metaphysics with logic in theology. As Libera has suggested, this can be seen as analogical to a second degree, since it lies between the relative univocity of metaphysical analogy and the relative equivocity of logical analogy.[21] Scotus also enhances logic and grammar within theology. But he goes much further. Earlier on, he had presented being as logically equivocal; later, in order to ground the possibility of predication by finite creatures concerning the infinite (once participated-in perfections had been abandoned) as logically univocal. Here, the univocity of being within logic also determines the character of being as a transcendental formality. Everything, whether finite or infinite, is univocal *in quid*, where being is taken to mean an essential "not not-being." Yet, specific and virtual differences remain purely equivocal.[22] Ultimately, the warrant for this move is not rational; rather, it is grounded in the refusal to grant existential and evaluative freight to abstraction.

II

Is postmodernity more fundamental than modernity? Is it simply an advanced phase of modernity, where univocity and representation become inseparable? But, one might object, modernity is very difficult to identify; so much so that there is little point in trying to resurrect the pre-modern. There is no modern, and so there is no pre-modern. Instead, there is "a certain Middle Age" that has been dominant. Where, in the midst of all these epochs which turn out not to be epochs after all, can one look? Many scholars, from French Catholics to exiled midwestern evangelicals (such as John Hare), seem to call for a re-theologization of modernity by returning it to its roots in Avicenna, Henry of Ghent, Bonaventure and Duns Scotus. If so, how should Aquinas' challenge to Avicenna (deploying Averroes, Dionysius and Proclus, rather than Avicenna's Plotinus, and a de-Avicennised Augustine) be described? Not as an invocation of the pre-modern, but as something like an avant-garde innovation against the modern, already begun in the name of an elaboration of the Patristic tradition.

Parallel considerations apply in the cultural domain. The "modern" might be characterized in terms of individual rights, bureaucratic formality and abstract economic equivalence. By contrast, style and the subtle conformity of fashion might be emphasized as denoting "the postmodern."

21. Libera, *La philosophie mèdièvale*, *op. cit.*, pp. 408-11.

22. Deleuze was right: univocity releases equivocal difference, but it suppresses analogy. See Gilles Deleuze, *Difference et Repetition* (Paris: P.U.F., 1968).

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From the outset, however, modernity entails the rise of civility as a substitute for liturgy. All that is occurring today is the increasing slide of fixed manners into fashionable idioms of behavior. In many ways, this augments the formal lack of underlying rationale and shows an equally greater need for surface reliability, rendering what lies under the surface not so much irrelevant as non-existent.

From the outset of modernity, civility undergirded rights. etc., just as univocity undergirded representation. The representation of subjects as formal bearers of equal rights, was only possible once their humanity had been abstracted from their creaturehood without any concomitant advance towards deification: a movement which paralleled the Franciscan shift towards an immanent levelling of perfection terms. Whereas, in the Middle Ages, deification involved, among other things, a cultivation of "cleanness," which for monks and knights blended both spiritual purity and physical integrity with bodily hygiene, from the Renaissance through the 18th century, the human being became increasingly a literally dirty bearer of an abstract nominal spiritual essence of detached reason and indeterminate freedom. Included within the continuing mediaeval Platonic practice of preventative medicine (greatly reinforced by Arabic influence) was the continued devotion to the Roman practice of bathing, sometimes even in old Roman baths. By contrast, in the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance, public bathing came to be viewed as a threat to morals, and water as possibly contaminated.[23] Frequent changes of clothes and resort to cosmetic concealment was now substituted for the generalized "baptism" of lustration: a bodily equivalent of the art of dissembling which the new civility was specifically recognized as often concealing. This can be seen as culturally equivalent to the perspective of ontological anarchy opened up by the formal distinction.

Just as it reached down into the body, "clean" mediaeval universal humanity also reached up into transcendence. After Christ, With St. Paul, there was now a universal humanity and no longer just Greek and Jews, males and females, slaves and free men, because all human beings were

23. In the 19th century, certain neo-gothic texts specifically recognized the lost cleanliness of the mediaeval monastic, ecclesial and urban civic order, comparing. e.g., public fountains to mean and sordid parish pumps. Lynn Thorndyke confirmed that the 19th century may well have been far less hygienic than the Middle Ages. See Lynn Thorndike, "Sanitation, Baths and Street Cleaning in the Middle Ages and Renaissance," in *Speculum* (1928), Vol. III, No. 2, pp. 192-204. See also "The Gawain Poet's 'Cleannesse'," in the *Pearl Manuscript*, ed. by Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1994), pp. 111-185. See also A. W. Pugin *Contrasts* (London: C. Dolman, 1841).

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no longer merely human, since God had entered humanity. Therefore, human beings became such only by elevation beyond humanity, just as to recognize the good (prior to Bonaventure and Scotus) was to advance towards God in one's substantive being. By contrast, within modernity, human beings could be human without any transformation: as simply thinking (representing) or willing (positing values). This new mode of formal recognition implied a shift in social ontology. No longer was society seen in terms of the liturgical body of Christ (the trace of God ceasing to be only God which inaugurated humanity as no longer humanity).[24] As Hegel realized, initially it had been only by this myth of divine descent ("the glory of God is humanity fully alive") and theurgic ascent ("the life of a human being is the vision of God,")[25] that general human inter-recognition was first established. But now, with the advent of civility as liturgy, a general humanity was given merely in the uniform practice of empty formal codes. So, to sum up: once upon a time there was only generality beyond locality via universal myth and ritual. Later, there was only generality where all styles were measured in conformity with one another and in the same ever-dictated and appropriate circumstances. And today? Now all there is is a general humanity where all wear the same back-to-front unmediable styles in the same spans of time.

This general legal and "democratic" representation (the abstraction of the general will so that it can constitute a single mirroring mind of government) presupposes civility, just as cognitive representation presupposes univocity. Here also, there is a reciprocal foundation.[26] Civility presupposes formal representation. Even if there must be orderly behavior and handshakes between rivals in elections or court trials, the hidden presupposition of civility is abstract equality and formal negative freedom. All may use forks (a Renaissance innovation) and wear their conforming or alternative styles or be dirty or externally clean (now without any symbolic resonance) in manifold conventional or subversive fashions.[27] It denotes nothing and therefore nothing (or everything) is affirmed or subverted in

24. Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: L'Eucharistie et L'Eglise au Moyen-Age* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1949).

25. Cited by Archbishop Rowan Williams in an interview conducted by David Cunningham, "The Converging Worlds of Rowan Williams: Living the Questions" in *The Christian Century* (April-May 2002), p. 21.

26. Eric Alliez, *Capital Times: Tales from the Conquest of Time*, tr. by Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

27. John Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1985), p. 121-2.

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the fullest conformity. If all are to be free and to aim for anything, then, paradoxically, behavior must be made more and more predictable. Inversely, an essentially contentless behavior always proclaims freedom, and the sublime gesture. Therefore "postmodern" civility and "modern" representation continuously spring up together. They both conform to "a certain Middle Age" — a Middle Age tending to privatize devotion and separate clerical from lay power, thereby immanentizing the latter.

Civility and rights coalesce around the idea of a normative formalism. Rights allow the appearance of peace through a regularity that disguises the *agon* — beyond any defence of a substantive cause — of the marketplace and competing state bureaucracies. Civility prevails in "civil society" or in free cultural intercourse that is supposedly unaccountable to State mechanisms and not wholly subordinated to the pursuit of abstract wealth. Any radical analysis of contemporary society must expose these twin formalisms as disguising the operations of concrete if self-deluded interests. Do postmodern discourses attain such radicalism?

III

Here, three tendencies associated with Emmanuel Levinas (and, to a large extent, Derrida, Deleuze and Badiou) can be isolated. First of all, a Levinasian perspective tends to merge the perspective of rights with that of civility. A Kantian formalism regarding the generalized other is supposedly exceeded at the point where a legal acknowledgement of freedom passes over into the non-legislatable style of regarding the other's specificity. This is a matter of cultivating a manner, rather than simply following a rule. Apparently this is a liturgical idiom, because respect for the other is described by Levinas in terms of the worshipful acknowledgement of the absolute Other, in his irreducible absence.[28]

Here, Badiou objects to Levinas that such a religious perspective mystifies and obscures human relations. If every human being expresses the absolute distance of God, then it is a matter of respecting the ineffable in mortals, and nothing is said regarding how to respect the actual appearing attributes of mortals — save vacuously, in so far as they contain a "trace" of the unsoundable. This trace is not an "image" that in some ways, if not exhaustively, can be characterized, as is the case for the human *imago Dei* within Christian theology. Here the merging of rights with the protocols of sublime civility towards others draws one even further away from a characterization of those

28. Emmanuel Levinas, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (Paris: Kluwer, 1984).

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others, whose noumenality now exceeds even the rationality and freedom of the Kantian bearer of rights. It is not clear that this sort of respect for the other rules out any act of violence, since nothing that appears is regarded as a token of what warrants absolute respect, and, furthermore, the realm of appearing is for Levinas always necessarily, beyond the whit of politics, contaminated by totalizing oppression. Because of this, Levinas does not seem to deny that an instrumentalization of human life and human bodies is unavoidable in labor (as a moment's reflection will show), but then has no means of teleological discrimination between acceptable and unacceptable instrumentalizations. Consequently, the most diabolical instrumentalization could still present itself as compatible with respect for the non-appearing other.

Badiou avers that this is just what the West tends to do with the discourses of rights and pluralism: when respect for the other harmonizes with the power of a Western ruling elite, liberalism is affirmed; when this particular mode of arbitrary power is threatened by external forces, liberalism is suspended and all sorts of terroristic acts and torturings are legitimated.[29] Ultimately, the hopeless formalism of Levinas' ethic is determined by its reactive character. For Levinas, the ethical impulse is born with the "persecution" by the sufferings of others, i.e., his ethic assumes death and violence as the fundamental facts of ethical relevance. Such a perspective is perfectly compatible with nihilism, and in some ways Levinas sems to provide an ethic for nihilists. This negativity means that, as, Badiou put it, for Levinas the only shared attribute of human beings beyond ineffability is that they are all going to die. Against this perspective, following Augustine, Badiou suggests that the good has primacy over evil, and that the good for human beings arises in those acts of imagination involving noble projects which transcend mere animality and mortality. Evil is therefore more or less private (though Badiou backs away from precisely this position) and not the radical positive force which wields the instrument of death in the name of totalization, as for so many followers of Levinas, Derrida and even Zizek.[30]

For Levinas, the best one can do is to exercise a kind of metaphysical politeness in the face of death. Badiou, however, oversimplifies in claiming that Levinas illustrates the danger of letting ethics be contaminated by religion. One could argue that Levinas commits the opposite error: transcendence is reduced to the essentially immanent distance of the subjective other, who occupies the same univocal space. The identification of the horizontally

29. Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, tr. by Peter Hallward (London: Verso, 2001), pp. 18-40

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-90.

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encountered face with vertical height tends to mystify that appearing. Similarly, the identification of vertical height with the human subject of respect reduces mystery to a civic formula. Badiou's own philosophy almost seems to require a more plenitudinous transcendence that constantly arrives through grace to unfold new concrete possibilities for co-existence. The space of the religious beyond the ethical matters to politics, because it means that the circumstances of good social blending rely to some degree on chance and coincidence, and are not simply under the command of the private moral will.

If Levinas can be seen as *the* contemporary philosopher of rights and civility, this is not obvious in the case of Deleuze. On the contrary, a Deleuzian perspective would fully recognize that notions of civil society tend to conceal the playing out of conflicts. Deleuze does not promote an abstract respect for rights, but rather a Spinozan wider and wider combining of active forces in order to permit mutual flourishing.[31] Such forces manifest no basic drives or possibilities, but are always the play of surface simulacra which conceal no real original essences. A certain Nietzschean distance from pure Marxist orthodoxy is indicated by a refusal to read the "society of the spectacle" (as the more Marxist Guy Debord and the situationists already described it in the 1960s)[32] in terms of an augmentation of the role of the fetishized commodity as an element in sustaining conformity. In a sense, for Deleuze, as for most of the post-1960s generation marked by Nietzsche, there can be only fetishes, and the illusion concerns the confinement of the play of substitution and divergence by abstract fundamental norms, rather than the older substantive norms of transcendence. This is the holding back of complete "deterritorialization."[33]

Nevertheless, for Deleuze, the modern order still represents an important stage of deterritorialization within the historical process. His position appears incompatible with Marxism, where it implies that pure deterritorialisation can never arrive, any more than Derrida's pure gift or pure difference or deferral uncontaminated by presence. In Deleuze's philosophy, "territory" is constituted within epistemological representation. Beyond this, and always governing it and undoing it, resides the virtual, which does not represent but constitutes new regimes of the event, and is not mere possibility because of its anarchic unpredictability. As in Heidegger, for Deleuze also

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31. Deleuze, *Différence and Répétition*, *op. cit.*

32. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, tr. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Verso, 2001)

33. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, tr. by Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1987).

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the history of Being ensures that there must be ontic illusion which is folded back into Being. So, there must be the realm of representation and of temporary territorial illusion, which is folded back into the virtual.[34]

Whereas Aquinas questions the instance of the Avicennian (and later Scotist) regime of representation, Deleuze affirms its sway within the real. Again, as with Heidegger's Being, this is because the virtual has no real ontological content. Just because this absolute is *not* God, it is in fact paradoxically parasitical on the very set of temporary orders which it institutes and ceaselessly undoes. The absolute speed of positive difference is too fast for being and understanding; their secondary illusion always comes too late, but precisely because of this, belatedness is inescapable, and all that remains is the conformity of the vacuum of empty retardation.

As Badiou argues, this seems to be but a variant of the Plotinian metaphysics of the One — so determinative for Avicenna's metaphysical innovations, and therefore for the modern outlook in general. The One has to emanate. In a sense, it is one only within and over-against the many that it constitutes. The Plotinian One is beyond being — not like the Platonic good with a hyper-reality of the irradiating ideal, but rather with an ineffable emptiness of perfect simplicity. Likewise, for Deleuze, the virtual does not possess even the latent being of the possible. It exists only in those regimes which disguise it in manifesting it, since their manifestation of the new also restricts the power of innovation.

However, if the virtual is oddly impotent, the various multiple regimes are strictly subordinate to the singleness of the virtual. For this reason, Badiou complains that there is too little difference in Deleuze, who, after all, is a Platonic metaphysician of the One. Deleuze's claim that the many always manifest the same univocal being in their differences, can be read in a substantive Neoplatonic fashion. This is because the specificity of their diversity belongs entirely to the economy of representation. At a higher level of reality, they are constituted conjointly by the virtual in being/truth (in such a way that representation is only a game within a cunningly contrived hall of mirrors). This means that before and after difference, difference collapses back into the One.

Part of Badiou's quarrel with Deleuze is political. All of this Scotist apparatus of univocity, virtuality, and formal distinction (whereby anything can get composed with anything else and anything can equally become unravelled) is only likely to issue in a non-revolutionary politics of relative

34. Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, tr. by Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), pp. 82-91.

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speeds, where the theorist is simply the spectator of fated conflicts between territorial politicisms and presidents, on the one hand, and deterritorializing terrorists and mavericks, on the other — which only obscurely allow some ingress for a vision of justice and freedom. Deleuze's metaphysical framework does not allow for clean breaks or even for any discontinuous ruptures. At best, it seems to allow only for the development of civil protocols of temporary balance between restraint and emergence, while one would always have the suspicion that the real manners pertaining between emperors and nomads occurred according to a predetermined and impersonal code.

IV

What is Badiou's third alternative to Levinas and Deleuze? Does it provide a postmodern escape from the coils of civility? In a sense, it does. Badiou's manners are much more those of revolutionary rupture. He celebrates the pure event or arrival of innovation in politics, cosmology, art, and eros.[35] Compared with Deleuze, this event of arrival is granted no ontological underpinning — not even the contradictory one of emergence from a virtuality which it simultaneously cancels or contradicts. In this sense, Badiou is much more convincing than Deleuze in claiming to have broken with Hegelianism. At the same time, however, the event in Badiou's philosophy ceases to have the sense of the plural fragment that still clings around Deleuzian and Derridean difference. On the contrary, Badiou insists that the revolutionary event in any sphere is henceforth universally compelling for all humanity, and he combines this with a traditional Marxist impatience with the politics of ethnic, racial, and sexual difference.[36]

For Badiou, the universal emerges from a singularity, not from a hidden background of Neoplatonic unity. Though he shares Deleuze's support for univocity, he claims that if he were forced to choose between the univocal and the multiple he would choose the multiple. Furthermore, for him, events occur not against a background of the henological virtual which generates an agonistic play between movement and stasis, but against a background of meaningless multiplicity. Here he develops a fundamental ontology on the basis of the Cantorian theory of infinites.[37] All there is is an infinite set of multiples that endlessly break down into infinite sets and subsets. All these

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35. Alain Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, tr. by Norman Madarasz (Albany: SUNY, 1989).

36. Badiou, *Ethics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-30.

37. Alain Badiou, *L'Etre et L'Evénement* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1988); *Court Traité d'Ontologie Transitoire* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1988).

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monadic universes, one could say, enshrine the mirror-play that allows the illusion of representation. Unlike Deleuze, however, these universes are originally there. Therefore, the possibility of representation is more primary, and it lies in a non-contradictory relation to fundamental ontology. What stands in contrast to representation now arises not before, but after it, in the field of the pure event, which is a kind of surface counter-current to ontology, governed by the Platonic priority of the Good over Being; but with the Good now defined in terms of the radical imagination of new possibilities.

The pure event is seen as breaking with the static given "situation" that embodies some set or other of the multiple. Here, Badiou appears much closer to the situationists and their surrealist legacy than Deleuze, because the break with the spectacular universe of the commodity is seen as absolute, and the pure event performed with integrity as a genuine origination uncontaminated by secondariness or mimesis. There is no longer any need for a civil or well-mannered social governance of an unavoidable ontological *agon*, between what totalizes and what breaches and innovates. Thus, politically, Badiou advocates militant industrial disturbances plus removal from the parliamentary processes. Yet, at the same time, he advocates also pressure on the state to force it to make de-stabilizing concessions. Against Deleuze, he claims that nothing in his ontology renders impossible the realization of the socialist hopes which drive such stances.[38]

This political approach has its parallel in Badiou's deployment of religious analogues. He is critical of Levinas for his religiosity, and he is a far more militant atheist than Derrida, and perhaps even Deleuze or Nietzsche, since in place of the Spinozan substantive void, or the Dionysiac will to power, there is a pure Mallarméan random throw of the cosmic dice.[39] Yet, this purer atheism is less obviously nihilism — less obviously the worship of a dark God. In Badiou's philosophy, the random and agonistic are in no way subtly affirmed and fated by a more primary virtuality or Being into which they are "folded back." As with Mallarmé, the hope here persists that a single throw or series of throws may yet somehow defeat the desert of chance.[40] On one level this appears to be a humanist hope (and there is far more residue of Sartrean humanism in Badiou than in other 1968ers, however he might protest. Yet this is not entirely accurate: Badiou retains

38. Badiou, *Ethics*, *op.cit.*, pp. 95-145.
39. Badiou, *Deleuze*, *op.cit.*, pp. 74-5.
40. "*Excepte/ à l'altitude/ peut-être/ aussi loin qu'un endroit/ fusionne avec au delà/ hors interet/. . . une constellation*" Stéphane Mallarmé, "Un coup de dès," in *To Purify the Word of the Tribe*, tr. by Daisy Alden (Huntingdon Woods MI: Sky Blue Press, 1999), pp. 122-65.

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the tincture of transcendence in the Mallarméan hope. He must do so, if he is to explain how the singular event can have the lure of the universal, e.g., how the French Revolution or a Cubist painting or Cantorian mathematics or the cult of romantic love should elicit the admiration of *all* humanity, and yet be entirely self-founded, appealing to no pre-given ontological or epistemological circumstances.

Here Badiou reveals himself to be still Platonist, offering a "Platonism of the multiple" that expresses the radical thrust of the later Platonic dialogues. Refreshingly, he points out that all the "anti-Platonic" and "anti-metaphysical" moves against Plato that appeal to difference and indeterminacy are anticipated by Plato. Not only that, he suggests that Plato's self-critique is the more thoroughgoing, because the tendency of Heidegger and Deleuze is to retreat into the monist or dualist cosmologies of the pre-socratics. If everything is really the flux of difference, then the life of the city — mathematics, erotic encounters, exchanges in the *agora*, the shaping of statues of the gods — becomes epiphenomenal and illusory. For Badiou, however, Plato was the first philosopher as opposed to cosmologist, because he claimed that there is the cosmos, and there is love and politics and art and mathematics, and then asked what reality comprises it all. This is why true philosophers can only proffer "platonisms." Plato's own answer, according to Badiou, eventually half-acknowledged the primacy of the multiple in both the cosmos and the city, but also struggled to explain why certain humanly contrived practices were absolutely and universally compelling.[41]

Yet, Badiou rejects far too hastily the continuing role of the Forms in the later Plato, together with his account of *methexis*. He unwarrentedly ascribes to Plato a recognition of the univocity of being. This leaves a flattened out ontology of the multiple, in multiple combinations. In this cosmos, the absoluteness of human practices is not guaranteed by participation in the forms, in Being, in the One or in God. How then can something with a singular beginning represent more than the arbitrariness of power? In asking this question, Badiou remains postmodern, yet appears to break with postmodern nihilism and enthronement of the *agon* of difference.

The only possible answer is that the event is the event of grace. This is exactly what Badiou points out, and he is forced to see the advent of Christianity as one crucial paradigm of the event as such. This is set out in his book on St Paul.[42] Yet, this is grace without God — an event of grace which delivers its own grace and yet only arrives by a grace that seems to

41. Badiou, *Manifesto*, *op. cit.*; Deleuze, *Différence and Répétition*, *op. cit.*
42. Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: La Formation de l'universalisme* (Paris: PUF, 1997)

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exceed its merely empirical or mathematical instance as a member of a pre-given set or situation. One may well find such a concept contradictory, since if an event in order to be universal must bear an excess over itself, the notion of an "elsewhere" seems inescapable. There is a further question: does Badiou ignore the fact that the Incarnation was not just a supreme instance of an event, but rather the first event of the arrival of the field of events (singularities that inaugurate a new universal)?

If Badiou escapes from the infinite/finite dialectics of "folding," and points out that Heidegger's Being/beings and Deleuze's virtuality/representation *schemata* are simply variants of traditional metaphysical dualisms and monisms, and not "post" anything, he still seems to offer only a stark neo-Cartesian and Sartrean dualism without mediation. His cosmos of infinite sets is simply "there," like Cartesian space hovering in a virtual void somewhere between geometry and the genuinely physical. Compared with Deleuze, it lacks any account of the forces involved in its genesis. As with Sartre, the emergence of another meaningful urban reality from this bleak cosmic rural idiocy is left an unsoundable mystery. The return to the notion of uncontaminated pure origins seems to lose the valid force of postmodern critique: historical beings dwell in secondariness, and anything apparently new is to some extent a copy, and so on, running back *ad infinitum.* One may applaud the refusal of that postmodern despair which sees every rupture as doomed to re-totalize, while being aghast before the adolescence of a perspective which thinks there is a neat distinction between politically repressive "situations," on the one hand, and liberating "events" supposedly without any antecedence, on the other.

So, if Badiou lacks civility, he merely provides an unredeeemed rudeness, which at times aspires to a kind of liturgy, but does not fully envisage it. Followers of acclaimed "events" would demand absolute universal submission to the implications of those events of which they would regard themselves as the privileged *avant-garde* interpreters. The proviso that no event can claim to be absolute, and Badiou's horror at the upshot of the Red Guards' activities do not placate this concern.[43]

The pluralist criterion to prevent a slippage into evil only reopens the postmodern prospect of potentially unmediable difference, this time between possibly rival universals. While Badiou will view the Incarnation/Ecclesia as a falsely self-absolutized event, could not this be the result of a failure to ask whether it is just the event which seeks to be open

43. Badiou, *Ethics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-145.

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to all events, not the perspective that subsumes them, but rather the impossible idiom of their co-belonging? Without such an event of events, Badiou's desire to restore universality in the face of lamentable drivel about diversity cannot possibly be fulfilled. His insights into the possibilities of a liberal totalitarianism should not be allowed to conceal the stark opening to an old-fashioned illiberal totalitarianism in his own philosophy, whose reverse face is a continuing postmodern liberalism.

Postmodern politics provides variants of modern civility, if sometimes in the negative mode of incivility. Can one think beyond this? Can there be a more substantive mode of civil blending that goes beyond the formal distance of polite respect? In accepting the postmodern sense that all is *simulacrum*, it is still necessary to distinguish a fake from a true copy, and thus locate Badiou's event of universal import. The way to do so is to suppose that there may be non-identical repetition without rupture, and at times an instance of a positive relation between the virtual and that which the virtual provides. In this way, there would be no folding back of the event into the virtual that would entail its cancellation. By the same token, one would not countenance Badiou's absolute contrast of event and situation: every creative event would be seen as developing the hidden and repressed seeds of a largely diabolical past, just as the New Testament is taken by Christianity as fulfilling in an unexpected way the fragments of antiquity.

This is not at all to deny that often, or even most of the time, Deleuze's and Badiou's diverse pictures do not correspond to historical reality. For the most part, history, including the history of the Church, is the violent interplay between stasis and movement, or the alternation between fixed situations and revolutionary breaks (though Badiou's picture is the less realistic one). The point is whether this historical reality reflects the ultimate ontological situation, and whether, if it does not, there can at times, if fleetingly and fragmentarily, be historical processes which disclose other, non-agonistic possibilities. Such rare sequences of events are, for all their paucity, more "compelling" than the overwhelming weight of terror, in the way Badiou intimates.

If they are so compelling, and if true events are not in total discontinuity with situations, this requires an ontological grounding. It must be that nature contains the seeds of more than the random, but also the sources of the meaningful, as Deleuze (in a distorted way) claims. If general situations and singular events can occur in harmony, there must be a higher ground for both these aspects of higher reality. This higher ground cannot be the Neoplatonic One, nor the merely virtual, realized in what it

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cancels, but rather a plenitudinous infinitely actual Being expressed somehow in the finite being that it provides or lets be.

This notion of participation in the source of all situations and events, which is an infinite unified multiple, implies that what emerges as event is a gift, since it is good in its harmony. As good, it expresses a good will, for how can the notion of goodness be detached from the notion of an intention of bestowed benefits? For this reason, participation requires that the event be the event of grace. At the same time, however, it also requires that the mystery of the source be preserved, since in seeing that the event is a gift from a higher source means that such source is recognized only in its self-manifestation as inexhaustible and infinitely reserved. Participation is always in the impossible; grace announces the unknown god.

By comparison, postmodern thought is unable to hold together grace and the *via negativa*. It seems to search for secular equivalents to theological themes. Thus, Levinas and Derrida provide a secular negative theology; Badiou, a secular account of grace. Yet, the former delivers only a formalism of civility more formal than the Kantian formalism of rights, and can also serve as a mask for terror. Inversely, the latter ascribes to a mystique of *avant-garde* self-grounding that renders grace a mask for pure human affirmation without possibility of redress or analogical mediation or appeal to a higher authority.

Does not one require both grace and negative theology? Then, political ethics could cease to be reactive and primacy could be accorded to the projects of the human imagination that combine appearing bodies and do not just futilely acknowledge invisible subjects. But one could remain suspicious of these projects as only partially and inadequately displaying what can never be fully commanded, while also acknowledging that that mystery was somewhat present in human beings irreducible to players in civic processes. Thus, the secular equivalent of both grace and the *via negativa* would go beyond either the idolatry of the humanly instituted or the more subtly idolatrous hypostasization of the unknown "beyond being." It would conceive the appearance of the withheld or the witholding within appearance. This thought also requires the liturgical practice of searching to receive as a mystery from an unknown source that grace which binds human beings. To think such a thing is to think theologically; the "secular equivalent" fades into the thinking of incarnation and deification, and the search for a liturgical practice that would allow for the continuous arrival of divine glory to humanity. Thus, postmodern secular theologies were never anything so grand. They were ultimately only partial theologies.

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Between the Universal and the Singular in Aristotle

Christopher P. Long

Although most commentators on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* agree that form emerges as the primary principle of being, the ideological dimensions of this position are rarely considered critically. If an ideology is the tendency to reduce what is encountered to the logic of an idea implicitly conditioned by existing power structures, then for all its conceptual sophistication, the philological approach to Aristotle reinforces the underlying ideology of ancient Greek thought and action the moment it secures the primacy of form. As the principle that orders beings, form functions authoritatively to legitimate the laws of knowledge and the possibilities of action determined by those laws. Yet, the dynamic path of Aristotle's thinking, as opposed to his system of thought, does not easily fit into this metaphysical ideology of form. Nowhere is this clearer than in the ongoing debate concerning the problem of whether form is universal or singular.[1]

There are four standard responses to this question. The first two embrace the dichotomy in which the problem is expressed, arguing either that form is universal or that there are singular forms. Aristotle has clarified the difficulty with these two positions: if the principle of being is universal, it will be unable to account for the singularity of the composite. As

1. The Greek "*to kath' hekaston*" is translated as "singular" for two reasons. First, as Owens suggests, "singular" is cognate with the Latin "*singulī*" which, as a distributive numeral meaning "each one," captures the distributive sense of *to kath' hekaston* — literally, "that according to each." Second, the term "singular" suggests irreducible uniqueness and, as such, reinforces Aristotle's contention that *to kath' hekaston* is unknowable. See Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Toronto, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1978).

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he puts it: "Socrates will be many things: Himself and a human-being and an animal," but if the principle is singular, it will not be known, for knowledge is always of the universal.[2] There are, however, two other ways to address the *aporia* that do not naively accept the dichotomy between the universal and the singular. One is to suggest, as Owens has, that form is neither universal nor singular; since it is the cause of the singularity of the composite, the form is, strictly speaking, prior to the universal/singular dichotomy.[3] The other, defended by Edward Halper, argues that form must be understood as both universal and singular. Form exhibits two different sorts of unity: it is one in number and thus singular, and it is one in formula, and thus a universal predicate.[4]

Whatever their differences, these four philological approaches remain similar, to the extent that they all intend to reconstruct the systematic unity of Aristotle's thought by defending the priority of form. While it can hardly be doubted that, in the end, Aristotle turns to the primacy of form as the ultimate principle of order, the great insight of his thinking lies in the irreducible tension between form and matter that emerges as he struggles to do justice to finite sensible *ousia* (being or substance). Theodor W. Adorno thematizes this tension in terms of mediation: ". . . if one takes seriously the idea of *mediation*, which is sketched but not really worked out in Aristotle, the idea that form and matter are really *moments* which can only be conceived in relation to each other, the question as to which of them comes absolutely first or is ranked absolutely higher becomes transparent as a false abstraction. And one will then trace the forms of the concrete mediation of these moments as the only rightful source of truth, instead of treating the product of abstraction which keeps them apart."[5]

Although, as Adorno recognizes, to ascribe the notion of mediation to Aristotle's concept of the relation between form and matter is to some degree anachronistic, much of the tension that animates the middle books of the *Metaphysics* is the result of an attempt to think the mediated identity of form and matter. Here, mediation is not yet dialectical in the Hegelian sense; although form and matter are seen to belong together in some way, their irreducible difference resists the unifying grasp of the Hegelian

2. Aristotle, *Aristotelis Metaphysica*, ed. by Werner Wilhelm Jaeger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), III.6 1003a10-14.

3. Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, p. xiv.

4. Edward Halper, *One and Many in Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1989), p. 244.

5. Theodor W. Adorno, *Metaphysics: Concept and Problems*, tr. by Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 41 (translation modified).

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concept.[6] This pre-dialectical concept of mediation is perhaps even more important than the Hegelian concept, in which difference is always incorporated back into the system by means of the unforgiving *Aufhebung* of the dialectic. The truth of Aristotle's thinking is expressed not in the ultimate affirmation of form abstracted from matter, but rather, in his attempt to think the concrete composite individual in terms of form and matter, without giving in to the temptation to reduce the one to the other. The moment Aristotle turns away from the composite individual and posits form as the ultimate principle of order, a metaphysics directed toward justice is transformed into an ideology intent on securing Truth.

Although the ideological dimensions of Aristotle's first philosophy, and of metaphysics in general, have always hovered just under the surface of every authoritative claim to Truth, in the wake of 20th century atrocities, it is no longer possible to investigate metaphysics as if it were ideologically neutral and divorced from the world. Adorno draws this out by pointing to metaphysics' qualitative leap in view of what has happened: "the assertion of a purpose or meaning which is formally embedded in metaphysics is transformed into ideology, that is to say, into an empty solace which at the same time fulfills a very precise function in the world as it is: that of keeping people in line."[7] If today Aristotle's thinking is engaged philosophically, i.e., with a critical eye toward the hegemonic manner in which form sets beings into order, the perspective dictated by what has happened cannot be eschewed.

Ironically, the ideological dimensions of Aristotle's first philosophy is revealed most perspicuously by those philological approaches that, in the name of reconstructing the original, attempt to neutralize the distorting effects of their own historical embeddedness. Furthermore, the tension generated by these approaches points directly to the continuing philosophical significance of Aristotle's thinking and opens the space from which to deal with the ideological dimensions of his metaphysical position. The following will discuss the four approaches concerning the universal/singular *aporia* in Aristotle, by focusing on the work of Joseph Owens, Edward Halper, Michael Loux, Michael Frede and Günther Patzig. The analysis will not be guided by an attempt to designate the most convincing reconstruction of the text, but by identifying both the underlying ideological dimensions of Aristotle's thought and the fundamental tension that animates his thinking. In turn, this will lead back to

6. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
7. Adorno, *Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

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his *Metaphysics*, in order to illustrate how this tension determines the very language through which Aristotle articulates *ousia*. This may generate insights into a *logos* that reflects its own conditioned finitude and is thus able of articulate its own ideological tendencies. The tension between the universal and the singular in Aristotle turns out to be symptomatic of a thinking intent on saving the phenomena by doing justice to the finite contingent individual. When this intention is sacrificed in the name of Truth and order, metaphysics becomes ideology, and the thinking behind all critically transformative action gives way to the coercive force of an idea that renders all action mere obedience.[8]

Form as Universal: The Ideology of the Pure Concept

Recognizing that *Metaphysics* Z.13 poses a formidable obstacle to his claim that substantial forms are primary *ousiai*, Loux argues that Aristotle does not mean what he suggests in Z.13 and explicitly states in a number of other places: no universal is *ousia*.[9] Loux contends that Z.13 establishes the weaker claim that "nothing predicated universally" is the substance of what is truly predicated.[10] In order to read a contradiction out of Aristotle, Loux introduces a distinction between species- and form-predication. The former, active in sentences such as "Socrates is a human-being," designates the individual by subsuming it under its lowest level; the latter, active in sentences such as "This pack of flesh and bone is a human," designates nothing generic, but the form of the matter of which it is predicated. Although predicated universally of substances, for Loux form survives the critique of Z.13 which denies that species is *ousia*.

Although Loux deploys the notion of form-predication to resolve the apparent contradictions that emerge from Aristotle's denial in Z.13 that

8. For a more detailed discussion of critically transformative action, see Christopher P. Long and Richard A. Lee, "Between Reification and Mystification: Rethinking the Economy of Principles," in *Telos* 120 (Summer 2001), pp. 92-112.

9. Loux suggests that, at Z.13, 1038b8-9, Aristotle hedges his bets about whether *ousia* can be universal by saying: "It seems (*eoike*) impossible that any universal [or, anything said universally] be *ousia*." Loux suggests that *eoike* indicates a sense of uncertainty or caution. See Michael J. Loux, *Primary Ousia: An Essay on Aristotle's Metaphysics Z and H* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 199. Frede and Patzig take issue with this reading and argue that in Greek literature *eoike* is not used to express how the speaker judges the state of affairs. See Michael Frede and Günther Patzig, *Aristoteles "Metaphysik Z" Kommentar* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1988), Vol. II, pp. 244-5. Whatever the force of the *eoike*, however, it is clear that Aristotle has no qualms about denying that *ousia* is universal. See, e.g., Z.10, 1035b27-29; Z.16, 1040b23; and H.1, 1042a21-22.

10. Michael J. Loux, "Form, Species and Predication in *Metaphysics* Zeta, Eta, and Theta," in *Mind* 88 (1979), p. 23. See also Loux, *Primary Ousia*, *op. cit.*, Ch. 6.

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ousia is universal, there is a clear sense in which species-predication has a certain necessity form-predication lacks.[11] In the end, Loux holds firmly to the priority of species-predication because he is convinced that the "what is it?" question seeks a general explanation: "But to be for an individual just is to be a member of its proper species, which means we need a single account for all the members of a given species. There is a single species-predicate that identifies what being consists in for all the members of a kind, and it is because a single form is predicated of distinct parcels of matter of one and the same sort that each is the kind of thing it is."[12]

Here, it is clear that species-predication takes priority over form-predication when it comes to ontological knowledge which, in the end, seems to depend on the ability of the *eidos* (form) to capture the being of the individual. Thus, the singularity of the composite is sacrificed in the name of a stable *eidos*, its essence is to be nothing other than a member of its kind. The singular is rendered particular. The assumption underlying this appeal to the authority of form is not only that the being of the individual is completely captured by the *eidos*, but also that the individual is ontologically determined by the idea. If the nature of an ideology is to determine each being it encounters according to the logic of its own idea, then the argument for universal form in Aristotle turns his metaphysics into an ideology of the pure concept; the objective truth of each being is said to be captured and determined by the unforgiving logic of the *eidos*.[13]

Even on Loux's account, however, the recalcitrance of the individual's singularity is felt in the ineluctable tension between species- and form-predication. Rather than seeking to dissolve this tension by appealing to the authority of the *eidos*, it is advisable to think it through more vigilantly; although access to the individual is always already the result of the deployment of concepts, it is hubristic to believe that these concepts not only capture the being of the individual but also determine it ontologically. If the appeal to the authority of the universal *eidos* inevitably violates the unity of the individual, perhaps it is better to claim that each individual has a form of its own. This is precisely what Michael Frede and Günter Patzig argue.

11. Loux, *Primary Ousia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-1.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 225.
13. For a discussion of the meaning of "ideology" in modern political life, see Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), pp. 469ff. Although Arendt distinguishes 20th century totalitarian ideologies from Plato's eternal ideas and Kant's regulative principles, the ideological structure of such systems have more in common with traditional Western philosophical thinking than it seems.

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Singular Forms: The Ideology of Immediate Intuition

Unlike Loux, Frede and Patzig argue that Aristotle's ontology implies that forms are singular.[14] This claim is made with regard to one side of the twofold meaning of *eidos*. They do not deny that when understood as the species, *to eidos* is in fact universal. When understood as form, however, the question arises as to whether it is universal or singular. Frede and Patzig suggest that the claim "no universal is *ousia*" leaves no room for any universality to be ascribed to form. They point to the claim that in Z.6, where Aristotle establishes a strong identity between the essence (to *ti én einai*) of a thing and the thing itself, forms are singular. By appealing to this identity, Frede and Patzig draw out one of Aristotle's primary ontological intuitions: the principle of a being must be immanent in the being itself. This may be seen as Aristotle's loyalty to the autarchy of beings and that the most important feature of the argument for singular forms is its attempt to do justice to this loyalty. But so long as this autarchy is thought exclusively in terms of form, it turns into ideology. Here, it expresses not the ideology of the authoritative universal, but of the radically independent singular. As Loux has suggested, Frede and Patzig's position becomes "radically nominalistic"[15] when it posits an unlimited plurality of unique singulars without recognizing that access to such singulars is mediated by a *logos* whose "brutal syntax forces them under concepts."[16]

Frede and Patzig attempt to circumvent this problem by appealing to the notion of knowledge in actuality that Aristotle introduces in *Metaphysics* M.10. There, Aristotle suggests the possibility that there is knowledge of what he refers to as the *tode ti*. Frede and Patzig seem to take this as evidence for the possibility that there is direct, noetic knowledge of singular forms. By affirming singular forms, identifying the form as the ultimate principle of being, and then suggesting that knowledge of these forms is predicated on direct noetic contact, Frede and Patzig end up endorsing a radical pluralism in which immediate intuition provides direct access to the being of each being. If the argument for universal forms turns Aristotle's metaphysics into an ideology of the pure concept, the argument for singular forms renders it an ideology of immediate intuition.

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14. Frede and Patzig use the term "*individuell*" when speaking of the universal/singular *aporia* and of forms.

15. For the claim that Frede and Patzig's position becomes radically nominalistic, see Loux, *Primary Ousia*, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

16. Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, tr. by Reginald Lilly (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 19.

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Neither account, however, can do justice to the mediated nature of the ontological encounter in which beings are both revealed and concealed by a *logos* at once conceptual and intuitive.

Neither Universal nor Singular: Toward a Totalizing Ideology

Owens undermines the rigid logic of disjunction in which form must be understood as *either* universal *or* singular by suggesting that Aristotle locates a way between the terms of the universal/singular *aporia* by developing a concept of form that is neither universal nor singular, but prior to both.[17] By thinking form as something prior to its instantiation in matter, Owens argues that, although form accounts for universality and singularity once it is conceptualized as inhering in some matter, it must be seen as neither universal nor singular. As Edward Halper suggests, here the advantage of Owen's position is that it accounts for the manner in which form functions as the ultimate cause of the composite individual. If the form were universal, it could not account for the unity of the composite; if it were singular, it would threaten the unity of the composite as a whole.[18]

This interpretation is animated by two insights. First, because it understands form as an act, it does not fall naively into the rigid dichotomous logic of entitative thinking in which the ultimate principle of being and knowledge is understood as some *thing*, either universal or singular.[19] When Aristotle introduces the distinction between a principle (*archè*) and an element (*stoicheion*) at the end of *Metaphysics Z*,[20] he opens up the

17. To find a way between the universal and the singular is more than a mere metaphor. For Owens, an "*aporia*" is a "lack of passage" — a connotation lost in its translation as "problem" or even "difficulty." See Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-219. Aristotle's answer to many of the *aporiae* is rarely to opt for one of the extremes over the other, but to find a safe passage by developing a conceptual apparatus able to address the concerns expressed in the formulation of the *aporia*.

18. Cf. Halper, *One and Many in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, 241.

19. The suggestion that form is neither universal nor particular has been considered incoherent. Thus, Albritton writes: "I doubt that Aristotle would have understood any better than I do the suggestion that a thing may be neither universal nor particular." See Rogers Albritton, "Forms of Particular Substances in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*," in *The Journal of Philosophy* Vol. LIV (1957), pp. 699-708. Halper sees this response as the result of an intense dedication to contemporary logic which recognizes only two sorts of entities: predicates and the individuals that receive them. See, Halper, *One and Many in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, p. 241. However, it may also be seen as symptomatic of a loyalty to "entitative thinking," i.e., a thinking that reifies being by conceptualizing it as a thing.

20. *Metaphysics*, Z.17 1041b25-33. For a detailed discussion of this non-entitative concept of form, see Christopher P. Long, *The Ethics of Ontology: Rethinking an Aristotelian Legacy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).

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space for the non-entitative understanding of form that is developed in books H and Θ. Owens recognizes the significance of this shift and argues that the ensuing discussion of the meaning of *dunamis* (potency) and *energeia* (actuality), in book Θ is meant to explicate precisely how form can serve as the ultimate *arché* of the composite without being universal or singular. This argument depends on recognizing the meaning of the term *tode ti* that Aristotle deploys in his treatment of sensible *ousia*. Highlighting the significance of this term is the second insight of Owens' interpretation.

The term is constructed by placing the demonstrative pronoun, *tode* (this)," next to an indefinite pronoun, *ti* (something). It is used by Aristotle most often to designate the demonstrably present composite sensible *ousia*. From this perspective, the *tode ti* points to what is clearly individual. Yet, there are also places where Aristotle uses the term to refer to the form understood as separate in notion (or *logos*) from matter.[21] Owens argues that this use of *tode ti* allows Aristotle to conceptualize form in a way that escapes the either/or determination of the universal/singular *aporia*. As a *tode ti*, form finds a way between universality and singularity.[22]

While Owens is correct in pointing to *tode ti* as the most fundamental development of Aristotle's thinking, this is for reasons other than Owens suggests. For Owens, the significance of the term lies in its ability to conceptualize form as the ultimate cause of the being of the composite. To think otherwise, he insists, is to go against the grain of the entire trajectory of the discussion of *ousia* found in *Metaphysics* Z. It would be to take the composite as prior to form and to understand form as existing only for the sake of the composite.[23] This would challenge the ability of form to function as the ultimate principle of being and knowledge. It would force ontology back to the site of its finite and contingent encounter with the concrete composite. To rivet ontological thinking to the site of this encounter, however, is to give up any hope of establishing an ultimate science of being *qua* being. Because this seems radically un-Aristotelian, when it comes to the question of the possibility of ontological knowledge, Owens, like Frede and Patzig, turns to *Metaphysics M.10* and argues that what is directly encountered in ontological knowledge is not the composite *tode ti*, but the *tode ti* as form. In so doing, he explicitly defends what is only implied in Frede's and Patzig's position, i.e., that something like the direct noetic apprehension of form ultimately secures the exact correspondence between knowledge and

21. *Ibid.*, H.1 1042a27-31.
22. Owens, *The Doctrine of Being*, *op. cit.*, pp. 388-389.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 388.

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that which is known.[24] Ultimately, the ontological and epistemological priority of form establishes not only the stable order of being, but also the possibility of developing a rigorous science of being *qua* being.

Thus, Owens suggests that by understanding form in terms of *energeia* and by developing the concept of the *tode ti*, which when applied to form, must be recognized as prior to the distinction between universality and singularity, Aristotle points beyond the composite to form and thus already to a higher type of *ousia* than the sensible. Ultimately, it is form as a pure act, devoid of potency, God, that accounts for the being of sensible *ousia*. According to Owens, Aristotle's ontological engagement with sensible *ousia* leads directly to the onto-theology developed in *Metaphysics* book Λ and the concept of God as the ultimate principle of order and security. Here, again, metaphysics becomes ideology the moment it eschews its concrete encounter with the composite individual and seeks solace in an ultimate principle beyond all history. Owens' account focuses on this, because it is so successful in arguing for the systematic unity of the *Metaphysics* as a whole. As a system, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* embraces the ultimate hegemony of God as pure form. Here, the ideology of the pure concept and that of immediate intuition merge into a single totalizing ideology in which the ability of the concept to capture the nature and structure of reality is simply posited in the name of security and order.[25] That Aristotle's metaphysics tends toward such a totalizing ideology is clearly suggested by the final approach to the universal/singular *aporia* found in the literature, for this account explicitly embraces the overarching hegemony of form as both universal and singular.

Both Universal and Singular: The Ideology of Unity

Like Owens, Halper is committed to reconstructing the systematic unity of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Like Loux, Frede, Patzig, and Owens, Halper recognizes that in Aristotle form emerges as the ultimate principle. But Halper takes a different approach than the others insofar as he reads the *Metaphysics* through the lens of what he understands to be a peculiarly Greek perspective: the problem of the one and the many.[26] Here, unity turns out to be the fundamental concept through which most of the

24. *Ibid.*, p. 428.

25. For a detailed discussion of the totalizing dimension of Aristotle's thinking, see Christopher P. Long, "Totalizing Identities: The Ambiguous Legacy of Aristotle and Hegel after Auschwitz," in *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2003), pp. 213-244.

26. Halper, *One and Many in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, pp. xxxvi-xxxix.

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arguments of the middle books come into focus.

From this perspective, form emerges as primary, because it exhibits two sorts of unity: it is one in number and one in formula. To explain how this is possible, however, Halper argues that Aristotle extends the usual understanding of singularity and universality. The singular, which more narrowly refers to the composite *ousia* individuated by matter, often takes on the more general sense of what is one in number; while the universal, which usually refers to the genus ranging over a plurality of members, takes on the wider meaning of what is one in formula. Halper suggests that the extended understanding of the singular is found in passages that refer to the unmoved mover, which is singular without being at all burdened by the exigencies of matter: it is singular precisely because it does not have matter. The extended sense of the universal, he suggests, is found in those passages where Aristotle conceptualizes the species as having an essence because it is one in formula.[27] Like Owens, Halper can sidestep the entitative logic that requires the universal and the singular to refer to things — either predicates or sensible composites — by thematizing the universal and the singular as characteristics of form, i.e., as "ways of being one."[28] Thus, ultimately it is the peculiar kind of unity of form that allows it to be both universal and singular in the extended senses of these terms.

This account seems to depend on conceptualizing form as a non-composite, indivisible principle — a position that runs into difficulties when the focus is the form of sensible composites. Halper recognizes this and argues that the peculiar nature of sensible forms is that they must exist in some matter: that they sustain themselves only insofar as they reproduce many instances of the same nature. This dependence of form on matter seems to threaten the singularity of the form, and Halper suggests that, in a sense, it does. "But in another sense, the one that Aristotle fastens on, it does not because form remains a single entity, a single actuality."[29] Ultimately, it is this other sense of form as a simple, indivisible, and indeed eternal principle of being that subverts the unstable tension between form and matter that manifests itself in the investigation of sensible *ousia*. Halper clarifies the implication of the maneuver when he writes that, once form is grasped as an activity that necessarily occurs in matter, "the particularity of individuals becomes irrelevant. From the perspective of form,

27. Halper, *One and Many in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, 243. For the former, Halper points to *Metaphysics*, XII.8 1074a31-37; for the latter, to *Metaphysics*, Z.4.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 252.

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individuals are merely vehicles for form's continued existence, and it is this perspective that reveals the nature of form."

Here, the nature of form turns out to be that of a supreme, hegemonic principle that seeks, in the name of order, to subvert the singular to its authority. What matters is not the matter, the source of contingency and uncertainty, but the continued existence, the necessary, ordered progression of the form. Accordingly, the composite individual is nothing more than the expression of form; its unique identity evaporates into the identity of the idea. If Halper is correct in assuming that a concern for unity was characteristic of Greek thinking, perhaps it was the ideology of unity that drove Aristotle to posit form as the overarching principle of order. This may be the underlying ideology of Western philosophical thinking, which conveniently permits itself to forget the finitude of the concepts with which it operates, and so continues to allow itself to be duped by the false belief in its concepts's ability to completely capture the nature and structure of reality. Although Aristotle and even many of his followers can be excused for failing to recognize the ideology on which the metaphysics of form is based, in view of what has happened this is no longer an option. Because of the finitude of human concepts, every attempt to discover the ultimate purpose of being is doomed to degenerate into the mere positing of absolute ultimates — principles designed to do to the plurality of perspectives what Aristotle's form was shown to do to the individuality of the composite: reduce it to a mere expression of the totalizing principle.

Not surprisingly, the ideological underpinnings of Aristotle's metaphysical position come into focus in the reconstruction of the Aristotelian system of thought. Ironically, these very accounts also reveal a dimension of Aristotle's thinking that refuses to succumb to ideology: his loyalty to *ta phenomena* — beings as they appear. If Aristotle continues to be philosophically relevant, it is not due to his ultimate "discovery" of the highest principle of being, but to his sensitivity to contingent phenomena. His attention to the individual generates the tension between the universal and the singular that runs through the entire discussion of sensible *ousia* in the *Metaphysics* and, by extension, through the whole history of Western ontology.

The Onto-logical Encounter

The ideological underpinnings of metaphysics emerge most clearly when the ambiguity endemic to the ontological encounter with contingent individuals is most vehemently denied. Ambiguity enters the ontological encounter from two directions. From the side of *logos*, which

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attends each being as it enters into appearance, the irreducible singularity of the individual remains inaccessible. From the side of *to on*, which for Aristotle can only be investigated as *hè ousia*, singularity does not give way without a trace as the individual enters the community of concepts.[30] Traditionally, this ambiguity, this trace of singularity, has been eclipsed by an ideology that posits a simple correspondence between *logos* and being, knowledge and what is known. Despite Aristotle's tendency to embrace some version of this ideology, the trace of onto-logical ambiguity is discernible in the ways Aristotle speaks as he pursues the meaning of sensible *ousia*. In the end, the ambiguity of that manifests itself in the very *logoi* Aristotle deploys, infusing his metaphysics with a recalcitrance to ideology. If metaphysics is to resist its ideological tendencies, it must pay more attention to the *logos* that belongs to the process through which beings enter into appearance.

Thus, one should begin with the peculiar formulation by which Aristotle designates the concrete composite individual: *tode ti*. Although most commentators recognize the significance of the term, there is much debate on its precise meaning. Whatever their differences, most interpreters recognize the centrality of the term to Aristotle's ontological investigation of sensible *ousia* and seek to minimize its ambiguity. But what if the term is inherently ambiguous because it refers to an ambiguous site — the concrete encounter with finite, contingent being? Ernst Tugendhat's interpretation points in this direction. He argues that the term designates the sort of independence of finite sensible *ousia* — an independence that is at once determinate and indeterminate.[31] If the demonstrative *tode* designates the individual as determinate, the indefinite *ti* subverts this designation by pointing to its inherent indeterminacy. Yet, the individual's ambiguity is no simple objective characteristic of finite sensible *ousia*; rather, it is the direct result of the very process through which beings manifest themselves. Adorno puts it this way: "*Tode ti* . . . is not really a concept at all, but a gesture; *tode ti* amounts to 'this,' and points to something. Aristotle

30. Cf. *Metaphysics*, Z.1 1028b1-7. The importance of the shift from *to on* to *hè ousia* cannot be over-emphasized. It shows how Aristotle's investigation of being is guided by an engagement with concrete, determinate being, rather than with an empty abstraction.

31. Ernst Tugendhat, *Ti Kata Tinos: Eine Untersuchung zu Struktur und Ursprung Aristotelischer Grundbegriffe* (Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1958), p. 26. His critique of the other interpretations of the *tode ti* is that they only understand the term in relation to *ousia* and do not see it as related to the other accidental categories. For Tugendhat, it is not only the finitude of *ousia* that accounts for the indeterminate nature of the *tode ti*, but also the fact that finite sensible *ousia* is accidentally determinable through other presences.

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realized that a concept for this, by its nature, non-conceptual thing could not actually be formed, that it could only be expressed by a gesture. . . ."[32]

As a demonstrative gesture, the *tode ti* implicitly points to what escapes the concept's grasp, yet, as a conceptual formulation, it is concerned with meaning. From this perspective, the term's ambiguity may be seen as the result of the attempt to render conceptual what escapes the concept's grasp. The *tode ti* names the individual precisely *as* it enters into the community of concepts. It is necessarily ambiguous because the singular never fully appears; it remains recalcitrant, retaining something of its autonomous independence.

This recalcitrance haunts philosophy by expressing the finitude of the concepts with which it operates. This finitude is expressed in the irreconcilable tension between the universal and the singular — a tension Aristotle recognized. For him, the singular (*to kath' hekaston*) escapes the concept's grasp, so it is unknowable; yet, it does enter the sphere of appearance; it presents itself as puzzling, indeed, as something wonderful. Too often, the desire to capture the singular as it appears leads to the delusion of the correspondence between concept and reality. This delusion is a sort of amnesia that allows philosophy to forget that access to the singular is always mediated by *logos*. Philosophical amnesia posits the particular, the instantiation of the universal, as the singular, ideologically obfuscating the remainder that reminds philosophy of the inherently coercive nature of the *logos* through which beings appear. In Aristotle, the *tode ti* points, literally, to the individual, itself no longer singular, but not yet particular. To deal with the ambiguity of this term is to begin to hear something of a *logos* acutely aware of its own finitude. Such a *logos* is a kind of *pharmakon*, serving at once as a remedy for philosophical amnesia, and as a poison to the naïve faith in immediate access to the individual's very being.[33]

The ambiguity of this *logos* can be found in other ways Aristotle speaks about *ousia* as well, for it is symptomatic of a thinking seeking to do justice to singularity as it enters the sphere of appearance. Thus, there is the rather peculiar phrase *to ti èn einai* (the what it was to be), which is usually translated as "essence." This translation, which has come to designate objective being, covers over the puzzling presence in the phrase of *èn* — the imperfect of the verb *einai* (to be). Indeed, the familiarity of the translation in the philosophical lexicon ought not be permitted to eclipse

32. Adorno, *Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

33. For a discussion of *pharmakon* as both poison and remedy, see Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, tr. by Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 70ff.

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the complexity of the term. Constructed by appending the definite article to the phrase *ti èn einai*, which iwas designed to point to the proper answer to *the* ontological question *ti esti*? (what is it?) the "what-it-was-to-be" for a given being was thought to designate the very being of the being under consideration. Most commentators seeking to account for the strange presence of the imperfect in this phrase argue that it must not be understood in a naively temporal sense.[34] Yet, perhaps the imperfect points to the contingency of all onto-logical encounter, to the inability of concepts to capture the finite singular. The imperfect indicates an implicit recognition that the being of the singular does not enter completely into the concept, that what a being *is* cannot be purely intuited — despite Aristotle's endorsement of the ideology of immediate intuition. What each being is presents itself as always already past; the what is it? question can only be answered in terms of the "what-it-was-to-be" because access to the singular's very being is necessarily mediated by the deployment of concepts that always come too late. The imperfect in the *ti èn einai*, like the *tode ti*, points to an ambiguity that emerges only in a thinking that remains loyal to the site of the onto-logical encounter with the singular as it enters into appearance. Once the peculiarity of Aristotle's formulation is turned into the familiar concept of "essence" and seen as designating true, objective being, the ambiguity endemic to all onto-logical encounters is covered over, metaphysics becomes ideology, and philosophy uncritically embraces its self-imposed *amnesia*.

There is yet a third formulation in Aristotle's thinking that points to the contingency of all onto-logical encounters. Like the imperfect in *ti èn einai*, this formulation also involves a peculiar verbal construction. After recognizing, at the end of *Metaphysics* H.6, that he must develop a conceptual apparatus capable of accounting for the manner in which the composite is a unity of form and matter, Aristotle introduces the distinction between *kinèsis* (motion) and *praxis* (action). While the model of motion could not account for the dynamic unity of form and matter, because it understood process in isolation from product, the model of *praxis*, which does not

34. Frede and Patzig argue that the so-called philosophical imperfect indicates logical, rather than temporal priority. See Michael Frede and Günther Patzig, *Aristoteles "Metaphysik Z" Einleitung, Text Und Übersetzung* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1988), Vol. I, p. 35. Owens argues that: "the Greek imperfect cannot here be taken as denoting *past* time. It refers in this phrase to something still present, and applies equally well to the timeless separate Forms. It indicates 'timeless Being,' and so implies exemption from the *contingency* of matter and change, upon which time follows." See Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

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sequester the two, but rather thinks being as process, is far more capable of accounting for the contingent life of the composite individual. In order to clarify the nature of this peculiar concept of ontological *praxis*, Aristotle hits upon a rather strange formulation. Unlike a motion, which is incomplete because its end remains outside itself, an action is complete in the sense that its end inheres in it. "For example," says Aristotle, "one is seeing and has seen at the same time, and one is practically wise and has been practically wise, and one is thinking and has thought, but it is not the case that one is learning and has learned, nor that one is cured and has been cured."[35] The former are examples of what Aristotle calls *praxeis* (actions), the latter of *kinèseis* (motions). He clarifies the difference by placing the present tense of a verb next to an iteration of the same verb in the perfect tense. Because verb tense in Greek includes not only time but aspect as well, the combination of the present tense, with its progressive/repeated aspect, and the perfect tense, with its completed aspect, suggests a kind of activity that is at once continuous and complete.[36] What makes this formulation significant is not only its ability to capture something of the openness of contingent existence — that it is simultaneously determinate and indeterminate, complete and open — but also its recognition that the present is saturated by the past, that the "is" is only accessible as a "has been."

Thus, what might appear to be immediately present is always already mediated by the *logos* that conditions appearance. To thematize this *has been* in terms of the pure present, appearance as objective reality, is to obfuscate the finite temporality of the onto-logical encounter on which all knowledge depends. Yet, to insist on the *has been* is not to call into doubt the reality of the *is*, to reduce the singular to the ideality of the concept. The power of Aristotle's thinking derives from his faith in the reality of the singular and the tension this faith brings to his ontological engagement with finite being.

This tension, discernible in the various ways Aristotle speaks about

35. *Metaphysics*, Θ.6 1048b23-25. Most readings of this passage have focused on a discussion of the "tense test" that Aristotle allegedly introduces here. Obviously, the present interpretation could hardly be more different. For a strong formulation of the notion of the "tense test," see Daniel W. Graham, "States and Performances: Aristotle's Test," in *Philosophical Quarterly* 30 (1980), pp. 117-129; for a critique of the attempt to read this passage as a test, see Charles Hagen, "The *Energeia-Kinesis* Distinction and Aristotle's Conception of *Praxis*," in the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (1984), pp. 263-280.

36. For a discussion of the present progressive in Aristotle, see R. Allan Cobb, "The Present Progressive Periphrasis and the Metaphysics of Aristotle," in *Phronesis* 18 (1973). pp. 80-90.

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ousia, resists the ideological thrust of a metaphysics intent on determining the individual according to existing structures of power. Once metaphysics posits the particular, a figment of its own conceptual imagination, as the very being of the individual, the unique singularity of the individual succumbs to a violent fantasm that effectively annihilates the possibility of critically transformative action. Action becomes critical only when it recognizes that it is determined by thinking, which is mediated by a *logos* at once coercive and able to subvert its own brutality. Action becomes transformative only when it embraces the responsibility concomitant with this *logos* that conditions all onto-logical encounters. Responsibility in this onto-logical sense entails both the ability to respond to the individual as it appears, and the recognition that all such responses, because finite and contingent, carry with them unavoidable social-political implications and so must remain open always to the corrective presence endemic to the concrete encounter with the individual.

Metaphysics can resist its own ideological tendencies by recognizing that truth is ultimately grounded in the justice it does to this onto-logical encounter. If it is to be able to critically transform the structures of power that seek to reduce the individual to particularity, action must be directed by this sense of onto-logical justice. The tension between the universal and the singular stands irreducible, a reminder of the limits of the *logos* through which being appears — indeed, a reminder of the *logos* through which justice first becomes possible.

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On Adorno's "Subject and Object"

Michael Marder

Definition and Confinement

Adorno begins his essay "Subject and Object" by claiming that: "The terms [subject and object] are patently equivocal."[1] This may seem banal; after all, a serious theoretical approach must define its terms rigorously. For Adorno, however, the equivocal meaning of "subject" and "object" is only a symptom of the underlying condition, which he terms the problem of defining. To reflect on these terms, it is not enough to create better definitions, if one does not also rethink what the definition of definition implies and how it frustrates the specific definitions of subject and object. For Adorno, "Defining means that something objective, no matter what it may be . . . , is subjectively captured by means of a fixed concept."[2] Incidentally, the definition of definition reinforces the severity of philosophy's predicament, since it relates something performed subjectively (an adverb) and an object (a noun) before each of these concepts is defined in its own right. In other words, if one is to determine what subject and object are, one must define these terms. But any definition entails a prior understanding of them. Such triangulated overarching of subject, object, and definition fashions both the theoretical beginning and the first irreducible *aporia* that marks the rest of Adorno's meditation.

In light of this *aporia*, any beginning of the analysis of subject and object is not absolute, as it is for Hegel, but qualified, conditional, and more or less accidental. Given the initial limitation implying the impossibility of beginning, Adorno provisionally "begins" his analysis with the

1. Theodor Adorno, "Subject and Object," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. by Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum, 1982), p. 497.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 498.

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subject. The relation of subject and object couched in terms of the definition of definition presents the subject not as a being, but as a having — a mode of acquisition that captures something objective "by means of a fixed concept." Epitomizing "mediation, the How — never the What . . . — that is postulated by any comprehensible idea of its concept,"[3] the subject included in the definition of definition is the principle of enclosure, of confinement, of borders, of *finis*. In conjunction with the "fixed concept," it forms the possessive and possessed apparatus that delimits the object in an attempt to create meaning out of an undifferentiated "yawning meaninglessness."[4] If the subject is "the How — never the What," then it is the How of the unsuccessfully suppressed terror, the How wishing to hide behind the impenetrable barriers that will separate it from "the dread of the blind web of nature."[5]

Fundamental to Adorno's argument is the uncompromising separation between the borderlessness of undifferentiated existence in the "blind web of nature," on the one hand, and the opening of borders he terms "peace," on the other. For the first time in human history peace, connoting freedom, announces the subject's freedom from fear (the How of the subject converted into the How of fearlessness), and the emergence of "the state of distinctness without domination, with the distinct participating in each other."[6] Insofar as "distinctness without domination," or de-finition, is maintained, peace does not lapse into pure indeterminacy. In another sense, it signals the "end of definition," of conceptual rigidity, and of the belligerent urge to capture an object that reflects a state of war transferred into the realm of thought. It is between these two kinds of borderlessness that Adorno's essay, but also philosophy, history, and politics, are suspended.

Nonetheless, in the here-and-now of the present, peace is nothing but a precarious glimpse into infinition overshadowed by the distress of the fearfully active subject. The continued existence of borders signals that there are enduring tensions on both sides of the definition's demarcation lines: in good conscience, no border may be declared totally peaceful. The walls of definition always establish the captured object as property; the decisive force of the "fixed concept" cuts into the intolerable boundlessness of the object; and special border patrols (formal logic, ontology, etc.) are maintained to defend the appropriated impotent remainder. Chanting

3. *Ibid.*, p. 502.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 499.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 500.

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its mantra, "The end of fear, the end of chaos, the end of difference!" the subject in search of eternity wages the nonsensical war of finitude against infinity and non-sense. What it does not comprehend is that even the greatest effort exerted by subjective capture falls short of its objective, because, mediating the appropriation of the tamed and delimited object, it recycles and re-consumes its projected impotence. Despite various safeguards, precautions, and agitated moves of confining definitions, the definition *of* definition inaugurates the end of ending in the tragedy of the transcendental and phenomenological subject.

De-Finition and the "Tragedy" of the Subject

Adorno's articulation of the tragic fate of the subject cannot be understood without reference to the logic of definition. In particular, the fate of the transcendental subject that either constructs or engenders the objective world is decided when one expects the semblance of an end product out of its definition: no matter how the subject is defined, "some entity cannot be *juggled out of* it. If it is not something — and 'something' indicates an irreducible objective moment — the subject is nothing at all."[7] Since the subject is instrumental in the object's confinement, and since it is not an ontological entity (a what), to believe that something may be "*juggled out of*" the transcendental subject's construction of the world would be to embrace the illusion of the object's release from the subjective hold and to misapprehend the outcome as the subject's freedom from the object. Both the freedom and the creative power of the transcendental subject thus constitute part of "the wrong abstraction, already a piece of reification."[8]

Where "the subject is nothing at all," it is not nothingness; where nothing can be "*juggled out of*" the subject, something can pass *through* it, because "the subject, for its part an object in a qualitatively different sense, in a sense more radical than the object, which is not known otherwise than *through* consciousness, is as an object also a subject."[9] In this fashion, what would appear to be an irreparable "birth defect" of the transcendental subject plays an important role in its metamorphosis from the tragic How, barren and constipated, into the How reconceived as the object's infinite passage. The infinite, essentially *incomplete* passage of the object through consciousness inverts the definition of definition in such a way that the subject is thrust into a position of radical passivity before any willingness

7. *Ibid.*, p. 502 (italics added).
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.* (italics added).

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on its part to entrust "itself to its own experience."[10]

Definition is de-fined, stripped of the finite content it has laboriously encircled with conceptual borders, and set on the path of the infinition of subject and object alike. But de-finition does not amount to indefiniteness, "[f]or it is only as something definite that the object becomes anything at all."[11] Even with the emphasis on the "primacy of the object," the triangular structure of the object, subject, and definition still stands; the properly dialectical primacy does away neither with the subject's employable How, nor with the determinate What of the object, nor with the de-finitive relation between the two. What is required is a redefinition of de-finition, along the lines of the non-identical (neither fully constructed, nor engendered) object infinitely passing through the subjective "moment that lasts."[12]

Another, no less tragic outcome of de-finition is the collapse of the phenomenological subject. The prologue to this tragedy is Adorno's demand to differentiate between the definition of the "prior object" and the object caught in the "subjective trappings" by way of questioning "the conditionality that conditions it" and "that which in turn defines the categorical apparatus it is to be defined by."[13] This is a call to return once more to the definition of definition and to distill from it the conditionality of the subject and the fixed concept that confine the object. Following Adorno's exposition and heeding this call, the phenomenality of the subject hinges on the impression that, as a principle conditioning the object, it also conditions itself, i.e., that "[p]henomenality is the subject's magical transformation into the ground of its own definition, its positing as true being."[14] As "true being," the phenomenological subject mistakes itself for an ontological entity, the figure of the capturer, as opposed to the mode of object's capture and appropriation. But as "the ground of its own definition" it immediately relinquishes the possibility (though not the ideology) of freedom; the capturer's self-capture denotes "the subject's unconscious imprisonment in itself."[15]

No discussion of the phenomenological subject's tragedy would be thorough enough without emphasizing Adorno's remarkable figurative language. To put it briefly, the subject is portrayed as a spider "weaving" a veil

10. *Ibid.*, p. 506.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 502f.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 504.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 503f.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 504.
15. *Ibid.*

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around the object and casting the "web of subjective forms over the unqualified Something."[16] Referring to "the unqualified Something," Adorno probably alludes to "the blind web of nature" over which the second web of subjective forms is cast. This duality complicates the situation: the second web, unevenly superimposed on the first, wishes to do away with it, to supplant it, and to establish the common "ground" — deferred in the mid-air of its difference from itself — for itself and its victim, for the subject and its object. Nested in the web of subjective forms, both the phenomenological debris and the edible insects-objects are rendered comprehensible and primed for appropriation by the spider-subject. The tragedy, then, lies in the fact that the web is one and the same with the spider (transforming it into the ground of its own definition); that outside of the web there is a nonidentical object it will never catch; and that the spider-subject is condemned to living on itself without ever leaving the plane it has constructed.

The spider-subject's self-definition turns it into the possessive, but also the possessed principle of capture. Out of obsession with its difference from itself (imprisonment in oneself experienced as freedom) and from what it fails to condition — the object that is not merely given, but "*infinitely* given"[17] outside of its web, and out of fixation on the impossible possibility of erasing this confounded difference once and for all, the subject works ever harder to maintain its definition intact, if not to imperialistically expand the edges of its web that peers "over the very wall it has built . . . [and] grabs a snippet of what differs with its well-honed categories."[18] The stage for a permanent hiatus in the possessive-possessed transgressions and a retreat into the subject's self-definition can be set only by de-finition, or the recognition of the absolute unsurpassable limit hindering the phenomenological subject and its object. One moment of recognition produces a conscious realization of captivity *qua* captivity occasioned by the spider's and the victim's positions in the common web of unfreedom and an additional inference of social imprisonment from the corporeal imprisonment in oneself. The other moment of recognition underlies the acceptance that the object is "infinitely given": it is offered each time in its entirety, but in such a way that the fullness of giving outside of any appropriation does not exhaust its subsequent givings and misgivings. Not only does the boundless object resist the confinement of definition, but it also necessitates an infinite subjectivity described, with

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 506f.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 506 (italics added).
18. *Ibid.*, p. 503.

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some reservations, in terms of "unlimited experience,"[19] the How unafraid of its metamorphosis into an infinite passage for the infinite object. Henceforth, the subject possessed by itself can no longer remain a possessive subject in relation to the object.

Amidst this contemplation of infinition, it is worth recalling that Adorno's appeal to the primacy of the object coincides with a rather sober warning *vis-à-vis* the inevitability of its definition. To some extent, the boundaries of the subject must remain intact, even though they assume the quality of unprecedented permeability: that which keeps experience "from yielding to the object without reservations" is dissolved, the forces of capture are "relaxed," and the subject "fades into the object."[20] Paradoxically, de-finition works against itself, hastily erecting walls around what it defines and internally undermining them in the course of the subject's fading into the object. Thanks to the enclosure without closure of definition, infinition occupies a permanent non-place on the horizon of subject and object.

Semantics of Infinition

Although the increasing permeability of the subject's boundaries that dissolve and fade into the object abuts infinition and consigns it to the horizon of subject and object, it does not exhaust the transfigurations of definition into infinition. Instead of undergoing a process of dissolution, the subject "as pure spontaneity and original apperception" separates from and, as a result, "defrauds" itself of the object.[21] In the last-ditch, all-or-nothing gamble on the attainment of an independent self-definition, it denounces every tinge of objectivity in its constitution and loses it all. Without a period of transition, without the luxury of a gradual process, it is expelled outside ontology, for "everything in the subject is chargeable to the object; whatever part of it is not objective will *semantically* burst the 'is'."[22] The semantic burst of the "is" tests the limits of thought without any warning or premonition — it is a lightening that strikes when all appears calm, when the subject "given" to itself only as a pure subject is offered the infinity of "nothing at all." This is a different kind of infinition, one that is intolerable to the point of madness, one that is experienced as the absolute shock against the background of the deepest desire for the security of definition.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 506.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 507f.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 508f (italics added).

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When the safeguards of the internal de-finition of definition are not in place, the infinite enflames the dim, and indeed repressed, memories of yawning meaninglessness, vengeful gods, and fearful passivity. The reverse side of this catastrophe is the undoing of the object emancipated from the subject: "After the elimination of the subjective moment, the object would come diffusely apart like the fleeting stirring and instants of subjective life."[23] If a reinstatement of the "primacy of the object" is at all possible, it does not, in any case, refer to the recovery of a historical moment before the emergence of the subject. The primacy of the object is not ontological, but logical; not temporal, but dialectical. Whether the subject is conceived in terms of the principle of capture, the unlimited experience, the spider's web, or the infinite passage, it functions as a medium that gathers the object, however incomplete (or should one say "non-identical"?) its assemblage may be. Gathering the object in or through itself, the subject relates it not only to an identifiable meaning (semantics), but also to what it is as an object (ontology). No semantics of infinition that proceeds directly from the desire to define the separation of subject and object can avoid posing a threat to semantics in general; the semantic burst of the "is" ensues from the quests for either the pure subject or the pure object or both.

In language, the semantics of infinition operates through the kind of ellipsis that frames the beginning and the end of Adorno's essay. The absent word (or words) to be inferred from the context of presence, when, e.g., "'one' stands elliptically for 'one human being',"[24] foils the semantic closure of definition and invites the infinite as an absence. Because elliptically "one" retains the trace of "one human being," it says more than it says, more even than what it intends to say, and affords access to a rather unique mediation of the particular and the universal (subjects). To return to the beginning, the omission at the heart of ellipsis should not be attributed to the lack of rigor any more than the equivocal terms "subject" and "object" should be ascribed to poorly formulated definitions. In spite of its best efforts, language cannot circumvent the problem of ellipsis, precisely because the infinite and infinitely absent context never passes into the text in its entirety.

In conclusion, Adorno revisits linguistic ambiguity — akin to ellipsis — in the meaning of German article "the," "which . . . covers both the individual and the member of the species."[25] The determinate article, oddly

23. *Ibid.*, p. 509.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 498.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 511.

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enough, preserves the echo of indeterminacy, vacillating between the particular and the universal. Aside from the suggestion (inherent in the indeterminacy of the determinate) that every individual is already a social individual and that, *mutatis mutandis*, the human species is composed of individuated members, Adorno identifies the effects of this ambiguity on the inevitability of definition: "Neither one exists without the other — the particular only as defined and thus universal; the universal only as the definition of something particular, and thus itself particular. Both of them are and are not. This is one of the strongest motives of nonidealist dialectics."[26]

In other words, the particular cannot exists as something infinitely particular, something utterly absorbed in its particularity. Likewise, the universal cannot infinitely universalize itself. The limits of the particular's particularity and the boundaries of the universal's universality are internally constituted, to the extent that the universal defines the particular and the particular is defined by the universal. Located in the cleft of being and nonbeing, of finite presence and infinite absence, "nonidealist dialectic" propels the universal and the particular, but also subject and object, as minimally defined in the qualitative, rather than the quantitative sense of the word "minimal." This means that, from a solid wall and an apparatus of capture, definition is reduced to a thin, permeable, and transparent screen between the infinite and the finite — the screen sufficient enough to guarantee "fearless passivity" in the face of "yawning meaninglessness," and yet inadequate for the capture, appropriation, and rigid delimitation of the object and, through it, the subject.

De-Fining Middle Passage

The conspicuous absence of what may be called "finite difference" from Adorno's essay cuts across all other articulations of identity/difference and finitude/infinity, but as such, this configuration is un-definable. The crux of finite difference is the ever-present possibility of uncertainty and masquerade, in which subject and object trade places, in which the passage of the former into the latter may be abruptly reversed, and in which extraordinary violence reigns supreme. The difference between subject and object is finite not (just) in the sense of the objective core of the subject and the subjective qualities of the object, but in the sense of the historical manipulation and perhaps elimination of definition with regard to both. If narratives bordering on myth and history are able to foreshadow

26. *Ibid.*, p. 510.

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finite difference, then Wilson Harris's engagement with the Middle Passage situates one in the greatest propinquity to this difficult term.

In "History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas," Harris evokes *limbo* dance featured in carnival life in the West Indies and entailing the dancer's movement "under a bar which is gradually lowered until a mere slit of space, it seems, remains through which with spread-eagled limbs he passes like a spider."[27] The dance originated "on the slave ships of the Middle Passage [between Africa and the Caribbean]. There was so little space that the slaves contorted themselves into human spiders." But the dislocation and the dismemberment of the slave by the imperial powers does not end with the state of cramp and paralysis; rather, it gives rise to a "new growth," the creation of "inner time," and a creative reassembly, or remembrance.[28]

The reversal of subject and object occurs when the Middle Passage mandated by the empire mimics the subject, through which the object-slave must pass. Excluded from everywhere and from everything, the slave-in-making experiences the full force of the possessive How of displacement at sea, in the groundless, yet absolutely restricted space of the new definition. Yet, the fate of this subject is "tragic" for the subject, at least insofar as nothing can be "*juggled out of* it." Consequently, the Middle Passage never constitutes the slave *qua* slave; the collapse of the old definition is not followed by the emergence of the new one, especially, not in the way intended by the empire.

The de-fined slave lodged on the threshold he will never cross develops what Harris calls "phantom limbs": "a new corpus of sensibility" that promises a different grasp of the event entwined with the "strangest capacity for renewal" and survival.[29] Again, subject and object trade places. When it seems that the slave is "finally" captured in the imperial web, he becomes a spider, living on the groundless change, and perhaps throwing a new veil of "subjective forms" on the terrifying nightmare of his capture. This web within the web epitomizes the unstable figure of finite difference, of unweaving in weaving, of the "inner time" that unfurls the uniform time and space of the voyage. Becoming a spider in the spider's web, a subject in the space of another subjectivity, the slave risks developing a secret complicity with the master who yearns, above all, for the establishment of common ground where none exists. But the gathering and reassembly of

27. Wilson Harris, *Explorations*, (Mundelstrump: Dangaroo Press, 1981), p. 25.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 27.

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the dismembered and the dislocated expressed in corporeal metamorphosis (another marker of finite difference) entails transgression without retreat, precisely because there is nowhere to retreat. That the spider-slave inaugurates a sustained interruption in its own and in the empire's definition explains the censorship of limbo dance "as a 'rowdy' manifestation" both by the complicit "new historian" and by the colonial ban.[30]

The deep-seated difference between the phenomenological spider-subject and the spider-slave of the Middle Passage comes to light when one discerns that, unlike the former, the latter is not magically transformed "into the ground of its own definition." The spider-slave, plunged into the condition of absolute dislocation and deprived of any firm ground by the uncertainty of the ocean, interweaves with and unweaves the alien web of the empire, creating barely perceptible differences in its pattern. To be sure, these liminal differences are often dismissed and neglected on account of their ostensible insignificance, for what could be more trivial than the position of the slave's body loaded onto the ship? In contrast to both loud and silent dismissals, the spider-slave's inability to turn into the ground of its own definition indicates that the subject breaches its imprisonment in itself (this is what instantiates its metamorphosis into the spider) and is infinitely given to itself as a non-identical object. The façade of indifference and neglect reveals itself as a calculated precaution of placing that which is the most unstable and indefinite in the most confined and definitive space in order to tame it. At the same time, this façade is dealt the final blow by the growing realization that the precaution is flawed, that it achieves the opposite effect, when the "slit of space" no longer adequate for the human body forces the contortion of limbs and reincarnates it in the shape of a spider. Ultimately, the Middle Passage defines the empire: the inner time of the spider-slave infinitely differs from and defers the uniform temporality of the journey, while its endurance in the imperial web endangers the very survival of the empire.

Conclusion: Beyond "Subject and Object"

While Adorno's article "Subject and Object" provides several valuable insights, it is plagued by a number of carefully masked unresolved problems. On one hand, it is unclear to what extent he overcomes the aporetic "problem of defining"; on the other, and more gravely, this belabored term appears to be questionable. The triangulation of the subject,

30. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

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the object, and the definition is both trivial and unavoidable insofar as, regardless of the philosophical tradition in which it obtains, the treatment of the theoretical object demands internally consistent and precise elaboration. This epistemological "capture," without which no knowledge can be produced, is dynamic; definitions mutate, and while some are rejected, others persist sometimes in a barely recognizable form.

At any rate, in his polemic against definition as the capture of the object that, at the same time, castrates the subject, Adorno implies that the epistemological facets of the subject-object relation are nothing but the symptoms of the underlying ontological-existential condition (e.g., fear and anxiety). Further, the most deplorable effects of this relation are relegated to the same sphere of ontology, in which the drama of unfreedom unfolds. But with his hallmark gesture of dissolving an epistemological problem (if it is a problem) into the reality of (self-) domination from which it was derived in the first place, Adorno both conflates and levels epistemological causes and ontological effects, and represents the subject-object relation as primarily conceptual, i.e., only secondarily ontological. In other words, what is the foremost target of critique lapses either into a repressed cause (fear) or the repressive effect (unfreedom) of the conceptual problem of definition that preoccupies Adorno throughout? Neither does this preoccupation allow him to question whether or not there are other modes of addressing the issue of objectivity — modes not bogged down in the aporetic triangulations, the conceptuality of the object, etc. Suffice it to say that the Kantian understanding of transcendental metaphysics and phenomenology is no longer satisfactory, and is especially inadequate as *the* representative example of philosophy's dire predicament.

One of the major theoretical imprecisions prevailing in "Subject and Object" has to do with Adorno's notions of transcendental and phenomenological subjects. While the latter is conceived as homologous with the "empirical" or "individual" subject,[31] the former poses as an abstract opposite (but at a closer look — a conveniently dialectical mirror image) of it. As one would expect, then, the tragedies of the transcendental and phenomenological subjects are, in fact, one and the same tragedy inherent in the *a priori* failed attempt to undialectically valorize and hypostatize one of these subjectivities without the other, and without the object. This is broadly understood as "domination" and untruth. Yet, in analogy to the caricature-like depiction of "pre-critical" philosophy as concerned with

31. Adorno, "Subject and Object," *op. cit.*, p. 509.

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the confrontation of the pure subject and the pure object, the strained division between transcendentalism and phenomenality falls on the side of a strategically planted sweeping over-generalization, rather than on the side of an accurate reflection of the corresponding philosophical traditions.

If the incisive dimension of Adorno's thought is to survive the 20th century, his articulation of the subject-object relation will require a diligent (and at times merciless) reassessment, for without such a reassessment, the contemporary commentary will do his thought a disservice, rendering it dated and irrelevant. The artificial "problem of defining," the superficial understanding of phenomenality and transcendence, and the obsolete critique of the staged confrontation of the pure subject with the pure object: these are the first three features of "Subject and Object" to be reexamined and rejected in order to clear the air for the truly critical elements of Adorno's thought.

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Heidegger's Communal Self-Assertion

James Gilbert-Walsh

While "community" is not a dominant theme in Heidegger's work, it has begun to receive serious attention.[1] There is a growing conviction that in community — in both Heidegger's rare engagements with it and his silence about it — there is something elusive which "calls for thinking." Yet, there is cause for hesitation. On the one hand, the theme of community weighs heavily on Heidegger: on at least one occasion (his controversial 1933 rectorial address), he advocates a vision of authentic community which, though not a direct endorsement of National Socialism, seems shockingly at ease with it. In exhorting the German university to will itself as a "battle community" [*Kampfgemeinschaft*], this address combines his philosophical terminology with Nazi rhetoric.[2] On the other hand, such disturbing political commitments may well tempt readers to sacrifice patience and rigor for the sake of reaching a verdict on Heidegger. Clearly, this topic must be approached critically yet carefully, giving each relevant text due consideration before moving toward any general assessment.

Here, the focus will be on communal "self-assertion" [*Selbst-behauptung*] during a brief but crucial period of Heidegger's thinking, beginning

1. For some of the most important recent discussions of "community" [*Gemeinschaft*] in Heidegger's work, see: Jean-Luc Nancy, *La communauté désoeuvrée* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1990) and *Être singulier pluriel* (Paris: Galilée, 1996); Miguel de Beistegui, *Heidegger and the Political: Dystopias* (London: Routledge, 1998); Lawrence Vogel, *The Fragile "We": Ethical Implications of Heidegger's* Being and Time (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1994) and Gregory Schufreider, "Heidegger and Community," in *Man and World* 14 (1981).

2. Specifically, technical terms from *Being and Time*, such as "resoluteness"[*Entschlossenheit*], "fate" [*Schicksal*], and *Dasein* are brought together with Nazi street language (*Volk, Kampf, Führer*).

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with his 1933 rectorial address[3] and ending with his 1936 essay on "The Origin of the Work of Art."[4] Much is at stake in this four-year period. Though it begins with the notorious communal self-assertion of his rectorial address (where a people's essence concerns their commitment to science), it ends with a different kind of communal self-assertion (where a people's essence concerns their commitment to art). Given this shift, and given Heidegger's claim that his thinking underwent a radical change after 1933,[5] his 1936 text might be seen as a "corrective gesture," i.e., a more balanced articulation of community. Yet, careful scrutiny does not bear this out. Despite some variations, the 1936 notion of communal self-assertion is largely the same as it was in 1933. This is not to say, however, that *both* Heidegger's 1933 and 1936 visions of community can be justifiably dismissed. Contrary to some recent interpretations, Heidegger's vision of community in the rectorial address is not as straightforward as it seems.

Techné as Science

In his 1933 rectorial address, Heidegger writes: "Science [*Wissenschaft*] is the questioning holding of one's ground in the midst of the ever self-concealing totality of what is. This active perseverence knows, as it perseveres, about its impotence [*Unkraft*] before its fate."[6] Heidegger's precise understanding of science shoud not be misconstrued here. To begin with, his reflections on the Greek origins of the contemporary term "knowing" [*Wissen*] show that, for him, science does not designate, as it does for most of us today, the subordination of practice to theory:[7] it is not disinterested observation, but the most interested and concrete action. Moreover, prior to 1933, "science" already has a unique technical sense for Heidegger. In *Being and Time*, he claims that each particular science is, first and foremost, the uncovering of a particular region of beings. What binds the various sciences together is their common relation to the totality of beings, and thus their common relation to the underlying question: what is the

3. Martin Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University" and "The Rectorate 1933-34: Facts and Thoughts," tr. by Karsten Harries, in *The Review of Metaphysics* 38 (1985), pp. 467-481.

4. See Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, tr. by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

5. See Heidegger's retrospective remarks (1945) on the rectorial address in "The Self-Assertion of the German University," *op. cit.*, pp. 497f.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 473.

7. *Ibid.*: "[The Greeks] were not concerned to assimilate practice to theory; quite the reverse: theory was to be understood as itself the highest realization of genuine practice."

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meaning of Being?[8] As far as Heidegger is concerned, the highest "practical interest" at stake in science is *Dasein*'s interest in Being.

Dasein's "impotence before fate" concerns the historicity of the field of questions pursued by science; specifically, all of the questions asked within any region of contemporary science relate back to and are grounded in the prior question that first opened up science as such for the Greeks: "what are beings as a whole?" In his rectorial address, Heidegger emphasizes that this Greek question is not something "behind us" in the past, but something that still lies ahead — something with which contemporary science has lost touch and must now confront once again. The challenge concerns how — and whether — contemporary science can be brought to confront its own essence.

How does Heidegger's attempt to spark such a confrontation? In his rectorial address, he is not only describing science; he is exalting science, exhorting the German people *to will* science as their "fundamental happening."[9] Whatever else science might be or do, Heidegger's primary scientific concern is a productive "self-assertion," whereby a community wills its own essence and thus becomes who it is.[10] The community at issue is the German university, i.e., the scientific "battle community" of teachers and students. Yet, as Heidegger indicates early in the address,[11] the "science" he has in mind can be understood only in terms of its origin in the Greek term *techné*, typically translated today as productive art or "craft." Given the historical context, Heidegger's political commitments, and his emphasis upon *techné*, the language and the tone are unsettling. It is difficult to hear references to "holding one's ground," decisive submission to a "distant command," and the "recapturing of the greatness of the beginning" without interpreting this as Nazi rhetoric plain and simple[12]

8. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. by John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper-Collins, 1962), §§3-4.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 473f.: "Only if we resolutely submit to this distant command to recapture the greatness of the beginning, will science become the innermost necessity of our *Dasein*. Otherwise it remains an accident we fall into or the settled comfort of a safe occupation, serving to further a mere progress of information. But if we submit to the distant command of the beginning, science must become the fundamental happening of our spiritual *Dasein* as part of a people."

10. *Ibid.*, p. 470f.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 472.

12. There is much that is questionable in this piece: the necessity that the German people will their essence by submitting to their "unyielding spiritual mission" (*ibid*, p. 470); the reference to a people's *spiritual world* as the power which "most deeply preserves the people's strengths, which are tied to earth and blood" (*ibid.*, pp. 14/474-5); the need for community to model itself as a "battle community" (*ibid.*, p. 18/479).

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or, at best, as an exhortation toward willful communal self-realization: science as the "crafting" of all that is truly German. In either case, the *techné* at issue seems to be one through which the German people, united in their relation to the essence of science, will themselves[13] and thereby produce themselves by affirming their own finitude. Heidegger's "impotence before fate" appears to point to a cultural and historical limit that he exhorts the German community to appropriate as their own. Here, an odd echo of Kant is unmistakable: "[T]he German student body . . . places itself under the law of its own essence and in this way for the first time determines that essence. To give the law to oneself is the highest freedom."[14] This is odd, because the law here emerges not from Kantian universal reason, but from the concrete destiny of the German people. It is precisely this apparent "metaphysics of the will" which many Heidegger scholars find most troubling in the rectorial address.[15]

The resonance of the rectorial address with Nazi rhetoric is unmistakable. Heidegger was certainly well aware of this. Given his terminology, tone, and explicit commitments, that his gesture here is "voluntaristic" would seem to go without saying. Yet, there are other resonances which undermine the claim that this text is rooted uncritically in a "metaphysics of the will."[16] Much of the address echoes the language of *Being and Time* and the 1930 lecture, "On the Essence of Truth": the emphasis on fate, on resoluteness as the submission to a call,[17] on the unguarded exposure to questioning, etc.[18]

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13. *Ibid.*, pp. 470, 480.
14. Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," *op. cit.*, p. 15/475.
15. According to de Beistegui, "What is most striking about this self-assertion is that its mode of positing is that of the will, as if assertion itself were necessarily of the will. Specifically, the very term 'self-assertion' is one that belongs to the metaphysics of the will, that metaphysics that Heidegger will precisely confront and submit to the most rigorous questioning starting in 1935. . . . The voluntarism that seems so overwhelmingly present in the address, and that seems to echo and amplify the willful rhetoric of National Socialism is a metaphysical over-determination that can be traced back to the very origins of modernity, a tendency which remains unquestioned and unproblematized in the address." See de Beistegui, *Heidegger and the Political*, *op. cit.*, pp. 44f.
16. Derrida has shown that Heidegger's relation to Nazi rhetoric is far from simple. Still, he presents an unequivocal reading of the rectorial address — at least where the will is concerned. He claims that, in order to free German self-assertion from a crude biologism, naturalism, and racism, Heidegger had no choice but to "reinstitute spirit in an oppositional determination, by once again making it a unilateralism of subjectivity, even if in its voluntarist form." See Jacques Derrida, *Heidegger et la question: De l'esprit et autres essais* (Paris: Flammarion, 1990), p. 53. Contrary to Derrida's reading, there is perhaps more to Heidegger's gesture than the adoption of a strictly ontical position.
17. The "call" of *Being and Time* is transposed in 1933 into the "distant command."
18. Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," *op. cit.*, pp. 128ff.

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These earlier texts are concerned not with "willful self-creation," but with a receptive openness to Being.[19] Thus, the question arises as to whether in 1933 Heidegger simply compromised his thinking, lending his terminology to something with which his earlier work is inconsistent, or whether another strategy is perhaps at work.

One reason to consider the latter possibility seriously is that the rectorial address, in referring back to the terminology of these other texts, also refers back to a strategy of *displacement* — the displacement of handed-down interpretative structures. For instance, "On the Essence of Truth" initially provides conventional interpretations of truth and freedom only to *think back through* their contemporary sense (truth as correspondence; freedom as an attribute or possession of humanity) toward something more original (truth as disclosure [*alétheia*]; freedom as somehow possessing us). In similar fashion, initially the rectorial address provides a factically-determined notion of science as "willful self-creation" (a characteristically — but not exclusively — Nazi interpretation), only to think back[20] to its more original essence: *techné*, where the notion of will, though not discarded, is turned inside out. If the appearance of some central terms from *Being and Time* and "On the Essence of Truth" is a compromise, this is not due to Heidegger's having inserted his terminology into a metaphysics of the will. Rather, these terms function as points of reference along the path back from science as willful self-creation toward science understood more radically as *techné*. But this raises the question: if *techné*, for the Greeks, did not simply signify productive "craft," what did it signify?

In his attempt to engage the essence of science, Heidegger refers to a line from Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*: "'knowing [*techné*] . . . is far weaker than necessity.' This is to say: all knowing about things has always already beem delivered up to overpowering fate and fails before it. . . . . Just because of this, knowing must develop its highest defiance; called forth by such defiance, all the power of the hiddenness of what is must first arise for knowing really to fail. Just in this way, what is opens itself to its unfathomable inalterability and lends knowing its truth."[21] Here, science's relation to its own essence is its impotence in the face of "the hiddenness of what is." Only in science's defiance of hiddenness —

19. On the receptive character of "willing" in *Being and Time*, see Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art," in Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

20. That a "thinking back" is at work in the rectorial address' treatment of science is suggested in Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," *op. cit.*, p. 473.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 472.

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and in the "failure" of this defiance — can it achieve truth.

Given his emphasis on willing, Heidegger might be read here as claiming that science truly understands itself (i.e., successfully asserts itself) only when it affirms the impotence of its will, thereby willfully appropriating this limit as its own. Such appropriation would be tied to the production of community, since the rectorial address equates willing the essence of science with a community's self-willing.[22] This would interpret the appropriation in question, both for Greeks and Germans, as a people's taking hold of itself by realizing and affirming its own finitude: a communal self-production through the willing of its own cultural-historical limit. Closer scrutiny, however, renders this reading suspect. Heidegger qualifies his comments on Aeschylus as follows: "Encountering this Greek saying about the creative impotence of knowing, one likes to find here all too readily the prototype of a knowing based purely on itself, while in fact such knowing has forgotten its own essence."[23] And later, he writes: "If we will the essence of science understood as the questioning, unguarded holding of one's ground in the midst of the totality of what is, this will to essence will create for our people its world, a world of the innermost and most extreme danger, i.e., its truly spiritual world . . . . [S]pirit is primordially attuned, knowing resoluteness toward the essence of Being."[24]

If one considers "resoluteness" in this passage in light of this term's function in *Being and Time*, it becomes clear that science viewed as communal "self-effection" gives way to a more original relation; i.e., science as the receptive, communal participation in the clearing of Being.[25] Granted, to "will" the essence of science — to acknowledge its groundedness in *techné* — is in some sense to "create" the community's spiritual world. Yet, Heidegger's choice of "resoluteness" (*Entschlossenheit*: literally, the character of "resisting closure") to qualify this "creation," indicates that willing, when related to its essence in *techné*, must be conceived differently. In this displaced sense, willing involves no productive "craft," no pursuit of a *telos* (not even in order to subordinate it to an unfettered "will to will"), but a holding-open irreducible to any determinate pursuit. *Techné* means to remain open to what obtains prior to all willing:

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22. Heidegger confirm this: "For the Greeks science is not a 'cultural good,' but the innermost determining center of all that binds human being to people and state." *Ibid*, p. 473.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*, p. 474. On the status of the term "spirit" in Heidegger's rectorial address, see Derrida, *Heidegger et la question*, *op. cit.*, especially chaps. V and VII.

25. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §28.

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Being.[26] This openness marks the point where the "will to hold oneself open" turns out to be "always already held open" — a "will" which, if it can still be called that, is neither active nor passive.[27] This "highest defiance" and "failure" indicates not so much an accomplishment of the will as a radicalized relation to its essence, where willing is transformed, displaced.

To be sure, in "remaining open" one is still engaged in concrete pursuits, but one is now exposed to what, in Being, precedes them and has always already withdrawn from them. In *Being and Time*, this resoluteness concerns the first person; it involves the emergence of "*my* ear" prior to my becoming a willing agent: I coalesce as a "listening away from" those determinate (*existentiell*) voices and pursuits in which *Dasein* is dispersed *a priori*, and as a "listening to" a call which first summons me to *my* existence: a voice which comes from beyond me, preceding me — the voice of Being.[28] In *Being and Time*, it is the individual who emerges in response to this call; in the rectorial address, it is the community. In any case, though such a responsive-receptive communal origin is perhaps suspect,[29] it is hardly a voluntaristic act.

In the above-cited passages, Heidegger refers to a knowing that has "forgotten its own essence," and insists that the university community "will its own essence." It should now be clear, however, that for him a community's willing of its own essence cannot be viewed as a formative self-determination (i.e., as the imprinting of a form upon itself *qua* raw material). Rather, the willing of communal essence involves the community's remaining open to this essence. Yet, the question remains: what kind of "essence" is at stake here? To what is the community remaining open? Just as the concept of "resoluteness" is developed in *Being and Time*, so is "essence" articulated in "On the Essence of Truth," which Heidegger concludes with the following remark: "The present undertaking takes the question of the essence of truth beyond the confines of the ordinary definition provided in the usual concept of essence and helps us to consider

26. On the will, see Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art," *op. cit.*, p. 67f.

27. The active-passive schema cannot account for Being's resonance through individuals, since Being is not *a* being and thus can have neither an active nor a passive relation to *Dasein*. This is precisely what is at stake in Heidegger's repeated use of the double genitive (e.g., "the setting into work of truth," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, *op. cit.*, p. 77).

28. Heidegger does not only say that the call comes "*from beyond* me", but that it comes "*from* me"(Heidegger, *Being and Time, op. cit.*, p. 275). Yet, this passage reflects precisely the "*unlocatability*" that makes this call of Being an *existential* call, whose source rests neither inside nor outside of *Dasein* (either of which would be to locate it *existentielly*). Cf. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

29. See, e.g., Nancy's *La communauté désoeuvrée*, *op. cit.*

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whether the question of the essence of truth must not be, at the same time and even first of all, the question concerning the truth of essence."[30]

In the epilogue to this 1930 lecture, written several years later, Heidegger reiterates that investigating the essence of truth requires a more original consideration not only of truth, but also of essence. Pursued rigorously, the conventional sense of essence as "whatness" reveals its rootedness in a more primordial sense: the substantive "essence" [*Wesen*] is derivative, grounded in the prior verbal form "essence-ing" [*wesen*] — the "essential unfolding" of the truth of Being. The primary task of philosophy — and of all science — is, then, not merely to represent but to *participate* in this essence-ing.[31] Both the 1930 lecture and the 1933 rectorial address indicate that such a communal-technical participation in essence is possible only by way of *Dasein*'s questioning of Being. As Heidegger emphasizes in the 1930 lecture, no historical community today can escape this questioning.[32] Thus, the 1933 "will to the essence of science" as the "questioning, unguarded holding of one's ground," involves the open comportment of *Dasein* (neither active nor passive), whereby the essence of Being, constitutive of the community, resonates through it. Here, "essence" reflects the 1930 determination of this term: truth "unfolds essentially" as the opening up of the communal world, thereby allowing the community to acknowledge what is not at its immediate disposal, but is rather most questionable for it: Being. The community is not so much the maker of its world as its active recipient — a participant in its self-emergence.

This is the displaced "self-production" of community: Heidegger begins with a conventional understanding of communal self-assertion as collective "self-making" (where the collective willing subject functions as producer), but procedes to uncover a more original sense of self-assertion, *where Dasein*, no longer conceivable as a willing subject, participates receptively in the *bringing forth* of its world. This move anticipates

30. Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 138: "Philosophical thinking is gentle releasement [*Gelassenheit*] that does not renounce the concealment of being as a whole. Philosophical thinking is especially the stern and resolute openness that does not disrupt the concealing, but entreats its unbroken essence into the open region of understanding and thus into its own truth."

32. *Ibid.*, p. 129: "History begins only when beings themselves are expressly drawn up into their unconcealment and conserved in it, only when this conservation is conceived on the basis of questioning regarding beings as such. The primordial disclosure of being as a whole, the question concerning beings as such, and the beginning of Western history are the same. . ."

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Heidegger's engagement, a few years later, with the term "production" [*Hervorbringen*] — an engagement wherein production as mere "making" is traced back to its original sense as "bringing forth."[33]

Techné as Art

Already in 1933 it was important for Heidegger to find a way in which contemporary philosophical and scientific discourse could be brought to acknowledge their simultaneous indebtedness to and misappropriation of *techné*. He interrogated the terms "knowing" and "science," hoping they would help him to achieve this. After 1933, however, he began to realize that this approach to *techné* is a dead-end: "science" no longer involves thinking; it does not shed light on the way truth "essences" through *Dasein*.[34] This is not to say, however, that viewing *techné* as science is simply an "error," i.e., a deviation from truth. After 1933 Heidegger continued to acknowledge that truth, understood as the "bringing forth" of the world, does happen through science. Yet, this "bringing forth" goes through various phases in the history of Being. Eventually, he claimed that contemporary science is structured and limited by that mode of "bringing forth" (of "revealing the true") which shapes our contemporary epoch: "challenging forth" [*herausfordern*].[35] This mode of truth brings forth and discloses what is concealed only by setting upon nature [*phusis*], extracting the true from what is hidden. What is hidden is determined as "standing reserve," as that which is "on call for a further ordering."[36] The reason science no longer facilitates thinking is that its operative mode of truth — "challenging forth" — conceals the very essence of truth that it presupposes. Since science determines all bringing forth as a willful extraction from nature, it is unable to acknowledge that all bringing forth, including challenging forth, is ultimately grounded in the grant of truth: a disclosure in which one can (and must) participate, but which one cannot control.[37] In order to discover *techné*'s relation to this primordial "essence-ing" of truth, it is necessary for

33. Heidegger emphasizes that *Hervorbringen*, translated as production, literally means "bringing forth"; the English term "production" (*pro-ducere*: to bring forth) derives from a similar original meaning.

34. As Heidegger put it several years later: "[T]he case of the rectorate 1933/34 would seem to be a sign of the metaphysical state of the essence of science, a science that can no longer be influenced by attempts at its renewal, nor delayed in its essential transformation into pure technology. See Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," etc., *op. cit.*, pp. 497f.

35. Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 298.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 309f.

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Heidegger to find another echo of this term in contemporary discourse.

After 1933, Heidegger began to approach *techné* differently: while the focus on "self-assertion" and "will" remain, the inquiry shifts from science to art. Likewise, though this self-assertion still happens through the community, it is no longer a community of science, but one of art. In "The Origin of the Work of Art" the contemporary view of artistic creation as the work of "genius,"[38] as willful self-expression, is traced back to *techné* and is reinterpreted — as science had been before it — as the receptive participation in the essence-ing of truth. Heidegger questions the conventional view that creation is a "making" (whereby a will imprints a form upon some pre-given matter[39]), by reiterating his attempt in the rectorial address to displace the meaning of "creation."[40] He goes on to explain, as he did in 1933, that "creation," understood through *techné*, is a mode of knowing and that, for Greek thinking, the essence of knowing consists in truth [*alétheia*], the uncovering of beings.[41] In 1936, artistic creation is seen as possessing, as science did in 1933, a singular meaning among all modes of *techné*, for it does not merely bring forth and disclose this or that present being (though it also does this); it facilitates the unfolding of truth itself as truth "establish[es] itself in the work."[42]

Truth obtains through the twork of art and thereby "uses" the artist, whose role, as Heidegger put it, is not to actively make, but to receive and incorporate truth. Just as the thinker in "On the Essence of Truth" — and presumably the "scientist" in the rectorial address — had submitted to the essence of truth, it is now the artist who takes on such a role in the process of "creating" the work of art. Moreover, Heidegger considers poetry, broadly construed, to be the most original mode of artistic expression, for

38. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 29f.

40. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Truth*, *op. cit.*, pp. 58f.: "We think of creation as a bringing forth . . . . However usual and convincing the reference may be to the Greek practice of naming craft and art [two modes of 'bringing forth'] by the same name, *techné*, it nevertheless remains oblique and superficial; for *techné* signifies neither craft nor art, and not at all the technical in our present-day sense. . . . [*Techné*] never signifies the action of making."

41. *Ibid.*: "*Techné*, as knowledge experienced in the Greek manner, is a bringing forth of beings in that it brings forth present beings as such beings out of concealedness and specifically into the unconcealedness of their appearance."

42. *Ibid.*: "The establishing of truth in the work is the bringing forth of a being such as never was before and will never come to be again. The bringing forth places this being in the Open in such a way that what is to be brought forth first clears the openness of the Open into which it comes forth. Where this bringing forth expressly brings the openness of beings, or truth, that which is brought forth is a work. Creation is such a bringing forth. As such a bringing, it is rather a receiving and an incorporating of a relation to unconcealedness."

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only poetry, as opposed to science, "[names] beings for the first time."[43]

As in 1933, here truth cannot be thought independently of the community: just as the scientist had been responsible for creating a spiritual world, it is now the artist who plays this role.[44] Heidegger claims that the community's relation to truth hangs upon its being a historical group, which somehow preserves what the work of art discloses. This does not mean that truth is first unfolded in the work of art and then, subsequently, the community finds its role in preserving what already has been established in the past. On the contrary, preservation does not "come after" the original truth; it is truth's very "duration," its remaining open.[45] The "beginning" is an "archi-beginning," prior to and necessary for any "beginning-end" schema used to calculate temporal succession. As Heidegger had suggested in the 1930 lecture, truth does not arrive *in time*, but is the very opening up of time wherein all beings derive their duration.

The community's role must be understood in terms of this beginning, this ontologico-temporal opening. As in 1933, when truth had to be received by the community through the thinker (i.e., the academic leaders and teachers who had gone back to the question: "what are beings as a whole?)," now, in 1936, truth must be received through the artist. Yet, this communal reception of truth can be realized only if this truth, as articulated by the artist (or, in 1933, by the "scientist"), resonates in the community that receives it — only if truth becomes part of the communal body and is echoed in the communal language (even if, oddly enough, the communal body and its language come into being only after truth has arrived). Thus, while in 1933 the community consists of teachers *and* students; in 1936, it consists of the artistic community of creators *and* preservers. Heidegger's community is grounded not so much in identity as in

43. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 75: "The poetic projection of truth that sets itself into work as figure is . . . never carried out in the direction of an indeterminate void. Rather, in the work, truth is thrown toward the coming preservers, that is, toward an historical group of men." Further on, he writes: "Whenever art happens — that is, whenever there is a beginning — a thrust enters history, history either *begins* or starts over again. History means here not a sequence in time of events of whatever sort, however important. History is the transporting of a people into its appointed task as entrance into that people's endowment."

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 76: As Heidegger put it: "[The founding of truth]. . . is actual only in preserving." To be sure, there is an obvious sense in which the artwork is already there "in time" prior to comportment toward it. But to think in this manner is to misunderstand the most basic ontologico-temporal significance of the artwork. For Heidegger, the artwork is a kind of "beginning," but "[a] genuine beginning, as a leap, is always a head start, in which everything to come is already leaped over, even if as something disguised. The beginning already contains the end latent within itself."

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difference. There can be no truth without this differential community that not only receives, but also incorporates it.[46]

Without indulging in a detailed discussion of the differential-polemic nature of Heidegger's community (i.e., the way in which community is divided, in its very "essence," opposed to itself prior to any identity), at least one crucial point should be highlighted. Already in 1933,[47] Heidegger drew attention to the differential character of communal self-assertion. Here, the rhetorical overtones, along with Heidegger's elliptical language, leave the precise nature of this differential "battle" [*Kampf*] unclear. In 1936, however, he is more forthcoming.[48] What he demands is an authentic self-assertion whereby distinct elements in the community, while opposing and asserting themselves against each other, ultimately acknowledge the shared resource (Being) that places them in relation to one another: bound together, yet held apart, facing one another. This differential resource is prior to and inaccessible to any will. Anticipating Heidegger's remarks years later,[49] it is none other than "the simple intimacy of belonging to one another": it is belonging-together as such.[50] In

46. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, *op. cit.*, pp. 74f.: "Art, as the setting-into-work of truth, is poetry. Not only the creation of the work is poetic, but equally poetic, though in its own way, is the preserving of the work; for a work is in actual effect as a work only when we remove ourselves from our commonplace routine and move into what is disclosed by the work, so as to bring our own nature itself to take a stand in the truth of what is."

47. "This battle community of teachers and students . . . will only transform the German university into a place of spiritual legislation and establish in it the center of the most disciplined and focused preparation for the highest service to the people in its state, when teachers and students arrange their Dasein more simply, more unsparingly, and more frugally than all their fellow Germans. . . . Battle [*Kampf*] alone keeps this opposition open and implants in the entire body of teachers and students that basic mood which lets self-limiting self-assertion empower resolute self-examination to genuine self-governance." See Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," *op. cit.*, p. 479.

48. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Truth*, *op. cit.*, p. 49. "In essential strife . . . , the opponents raise each other into the self-assertion of their natures. Self-assertion of nature, however, is never a rigid insistence upon some contingent state, but surrender to the concealed originality of the source of one's own being. In the struggle, each opponent carries the other beyond itself . . . . The more the struggle overdoes itself on its own part, the more inflexibly do the opponents let themselves go into the intimacy of simple belonging to one another." Though the specific opponents Heidegger has in mind here are not distinct elements in the community, but rather world and earth — *alétheia* and *léthé* — this formulation applies generally to opposition as such, including that of creators/preservers.

49. See Heidegger's remarks on "*Ereignis*" in *Identity and Difference*, tr. by Kurt F. Leidecker (New York: Philosophical Library Inc., 1960).

50. While the 1936 polemical character of community, already emphasized by Heidegger in 1933, should be acknowledged, the extent to which this differential character resists what Nancy calls "immanence" should not be overemphasized. In 1936, as in 1933, Heidegger subordinates differences to the unity of an identifiable, historico-linguistic site.

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1936, the original poetic saying, where truth is set to work, needs to leave its trace throughout that language which "preserves the original nature of poetry" and is this preserving resonance: the language of the community. Yet, is this so different from Heidegger's 1933 communal vision? Does he not indicate there that language — the language of the German university and, more broadly, of Germany and even of the West — preserves the original nature of science? In both cases, community dwells in this prior opening by maintaining it as an opening, preserving the echo of that original saying which first named beings in terms of their Being. This dwelling is "historical," not only because the beginning offers communal preservation a starting point in relation to which it can measure itself temporally, but also because, in its differential response, it grants community the very "time" in which its preservative saying can unfold.

But what is at stake here? Why is it imperative to investigate precisely what Heidegger means by "communal self-assertion"? There is, of course, a concern to interpret Heidegger correctly, that his texts be read as carefully as any philosophical text. Only by acknowledging that the 1933 communal self-assertion was no mere submission to a "metaphysics of the will" and that afterwards there was no radical transformation of this self-assertion, can the overall role of self-assertion in Heidegger's thinking be understood.

In addition, however, this topic opens on to a larger set of stakes: Heidegger's reflections on collective self-assertion as the origin of authentic community constitute a crucial moment in his extended and often perplexing engagement with community as such. There have been many attempts to assess the relation between Heidegger and the political, to determine what practical (or technical) relevance his thinking might have. Yet, is it possible to say anything clear about "Heidegger's relation to politics" without first carefully investigating the shifting role of "community" in his texts? As Gregory Schufreider put it: ". . . any attempt to think Heidegger's idea of community on the basis of his political involvement, in effect, begs the question; for it turns out that how this involvement is itself to be interpreted depends largely upon our construal of his idea of community."[51]

51. Schufreider, "Heidegger and Community," *op. cit.*, p. 49.

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The Derrida Virus

Nikos A. Salingaros

Since the 1960s, deconstruction has sought to undermine all well-ordered structures.[1] It needs something ordered (either actual or latent) on which to act and then to destroy. Thus, it is entirely parasitic. With one notable exception, what its advocates say about deconstruction is clouded by confusion. Since it is an attack on logic, it does not produce logical statements.[2] It can, however, be understood by what it actually does. It dismantles structure, logical statements, traditional beliefs, observations, etc. When criticized for dismantling these entities, deconstructionists insist they are merely analyzing and commenting on text. This approach resembles the way viruses survive and proliferate.

Derrida has called deconstruction a "virus," i.e., an inert code that replicates itself by using a host. Its strategy is to make an unsuspecting host ingest it, to force the host's internal machinery to make new copies of the virus, and to spread as many of these copies as possible, in order to maximize the possibility of infecting new hosts. The virus requires a more complex host to invade and destroy, but cannot live by itself. Originating

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1. "Deconstruction is a method of analyzing texts based on the idea that language is inherently unstable and shifting and that the reader rather than the author is central in determining meaning. It was introduced by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida in the late 1960s." See *Encarta World English Dictionary* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). This means that texts have no ultimate meaning, and that their interpretation is up to readers. Thus, deconstruction pretends to be a call of liberation from the hegemony of certainty.

2. According to Derrida: "All sentences of the type 'deconstruction is *X*' or 'deconstruction is not *X*' *a priori* miss the point, which is to say that they are at least false. One of the principal things in deconstruction is the delimiting of ontology and above all of the third person present indicative: *S* is *P*." Cited in Jeff Collins and Bill Mayblin, *Introducing Derrida* (Cambridge: Icon Books, 1996), p. 93.

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in France, deconstruction has "infected" most disciplines in universities everywhere.[3] Fortunately, since most people cannot understand it, it has influenced society only indirectly.

Deconstruction erases normal ways of thinking. It may appear incomprehensible, but it is very effective: it erases associations that form coherent thoughts. It acts like a computer virus that erases information in a hard disk. The Derrida virus seeks to undermine any original meaning via a complex and entirely self-referential play of words.[4] Otherwise astute critics have made the mistake of dismissing Derrida as another obfuscating French philosopher. Yet, what he has introduced is much more dangerous. He turns knowledge into randomness, just as a virus destroys living organisms by disintegrating individual cells.[5] Deconstruction has been remarkably successful in dismantling traditional literature, art, and architecture. Like a biological virus, deconstruction is careful to balance host survival with infectivity. It only partially destroys its host, because total destruction would stop further transmission. It breaks up coherent sets of ideas by separating natural modules into submodules. Some of these submodules are then selectively destroyed in order to reattach their components randomly into an incoherent construct. A variant of the Derrida virus does not attack a specific text, but scavenges a discipline as a whole. It works on the collected work of many authors dealing with a particular topic. Its components are then reassembled in a nonsensical jumble that is only misleadingly and superficially coherent and appears viable to those unfamiliar with the host discipline and its vocabulary.

3. In an uncharacteristically clear statement, Derrida states his objectives: "All I have done . . . is dominated by the thought of a virus, what could be called a parasitology, a virology, the virus being many things . . . The virus is in part a parasite that destroys, that introduces disorder into communication. Even from the biological standpoint, this is what happens with a virus; it derails a mechanism of the communicational type, its coding and decoding. . . [it] is neither alive nor dead . . .[this is] all that I have done since I began writing." See Peter Brunette and David Wills, eds., *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 12. See also Nikos Salingaros, "Twentieth-Century Architecture as a Cult," in *INTBAU — International Network for Traditional Building. Architecture & Urbanism*, Vol. 1, Essay No. 3 (2002).

4. See Roger Scruton, *An Intelligent Person's Guide to Modern Culture* (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2000), Chapter 12: "The Devil's Work."

5. Its properties can be summarized as follows: (1) The virus is a very small amount of information encoded either as a list of instructions to follow or as examples to copy. (2) Within an appropriate host, the virus directs the partial disintegration of order and connectivity in the host structure. (3) The virus then directs the reassembly of portions of the host structure, but in a way that denies connections necessary to achieve coherence or life. (4) The end product must encode the virus in its structure. (5) A deconstructed product is the vehicle for transmission of the viral code to the next host.

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Deconstructive Architecture

Deconstruction's most visible manifestation is in architecture, in a building style characterized by broken, jagged, and lopsided forms, evoking physical destruction.[6] Architectural theory has embraced deconstruction in order to reverse architecture's main *raison d'être*: to provide viable shelter. Deconstructionists claim that deconstruction is just another design style, and, as such, has a right to be articulated. But alienating architectural structures can do far more damage than confused academics churning out nonsense. In infecting contemporary architecture, the Derrida virus attacks a form's internal organization and coherence, leaving forms embodying disorganized complexity. It has migrated from high-profile buildings to infect more mundane commercial structures, such as office buildings, hospitals, and stores. Since deconstructionists avoid any self-definition, most deconstructive architects deny being such.[7] This may be due to the fact that architects do not like being branded with a particular label, or admit that they have changed their minds.

Architecture's goals happen to be precisely what Derrida rejects: aesthetics, beauty, usefulness, functionality, living, and dwelling. They are its very foundation, absolutely essential, and hardly extraneous to its practice. Architecture was never really subordinated to anything; it arises out of and is an expression of human needs. Deconstruction applied to buildings removes their architectural qualities, while "reinscribing" a useless and superficial semblance of order that appears only as abstract motifs.[8]

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6. According to David Watkin's *A History of Western Architecture*, 3d. Edition (New York: Watson-Guptill, 2000), p. 674: "The leading architects of the populist yet aggressive architecture of Deconstructivism are Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Daniel Libeskind, Rem Koolhaas and the latter's pupil, the Iraqi-born Zaha Hadid."

7. Charles Jencks, "Interview of Peter Eisenman", in *AD — Architectural Design*, Vol. 58 No. 3/4 (1988), pp. 49-61.

8. In the 1980s, Derrida worked with Peter Eisenman on a project for the Parc de La Villette in Paris. It was to be a small garden embodying de-ontologized non-space (whatever that means), but fortunately it was never built. What Derrida said about the design demonstrates the anti-architectural position of deconstruction: "[It's a critique of] everything that subordinated architecture to something else — the value of, let's say, usefulness or beauty or living . . . not in order to build something else that would be useless or ugly or uninhabitable, but to free architecture from all those external finalities, extraneous goals . . . to contaminate architecture . . . I think that Deconstruction comes about . . . when you have deconstructed some architectural philosophy, some architectural assumptions — for instance, the hegemony of the aesthetic, of beauty, the hegemony of usefulness, of functionality, of living, of dwelling. But then you have to reinscribe these motifs within the work." See Christopher Norris, "Interview of Jacques Derrida," in *AD — Architectural Design*, Vol. 59, No. 1/2, 1989, pp. 6-11.

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Even Derrida concedes that what he has in mind for architecture is not architecture as such. What he proposes is an architecture of death for the new millennium.[9] An architecture that reverses structural algorithms so as to create disorder — the same algorithms that in an infinitely more detailed application generate living form — ceases to be architecture. Deconstructionists buildings are the most visible symbols of actual deconstruction. The randomness they embody is the antithesis of nature's organized complexity. This is despite effusive praise in the press for "exciting" new academic buildings, such as the Peter B. Lewis Management Building at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, the Vontz Center for Molecular Studies at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, and the Stata Center for Computer, Information, and Intelligence Sciences at MIT, all by Frank Gehry. Housing a scientific department inside the symbol of its nemesis must be the ultimate irony.

Otherwise knowledgeable clients, including academics, have been seduced to commission tortuous buildings in the deconstructionist style. There are fellow architects who proudly proclaim the virtues of a new university building by a famous deconstructionist architect, such as the Aronoff Center for Design and Art at the University of Cincinnati by Peter Eisenman. At the same time, ordinary people consider it ugly, odd, and senseless.

An example of this vanguard deconstructionist architectural style is Frank Gehry's celebrated New Guggenhiem Museum in Bilbao, Spain, which represents an unnatural imposition of free-flowing ribbon forms sheathed in a continuous, shiny metal skin. Besides the deliberate disorientation, which it produces visually through absence of a vertical, Gehry has eliminated or randomized components that would otherwise contribute to coherence. A repeating form in the vertical or horizontal directions (or possibly both) ties a large surface together visually.[10] Gehry's Bilbao

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9. In a talk published by Eisenman's wife, Derrida says: "Now, if I were forced to stop here and to say what the architecture of the next millennium should be, I would say: in its type, it should be neither an architecture of the subject nor an architecture of Dasein [being; existence; life]. But then, perhaps, it will have to give up its name of architecture, which has been linked to these different, but somehow continuous ways of thinking. Indeed, perhaps it is already losing its name, perhaps architecture is already becoming foreign to its name." See Jacques Derrida, "58 min 41 sec: Summary of Impromptu Remarks," in *Anyone*, ed. by Cynthia Davidson (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), pp. 39-45. On "the architecture of life" and "the architecture of death," see Brian Hanson and Nikos Salingaros, "Death, Life, and Libeskind," in *Architectural Record Online — In the Cause of Architecture* (February 2003).

10. Thus, in Classical and Modernist buildings windows are lined up so as to provide translational symmetry. In other instances, rotational symmetry ties windows together on some Medieval Cathedral fronts; otherwise it is used on the plan of a circular building.

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Museum dispenses with components altogether. There is no translational or rotational symmetry.[11] The sense of incoherence is reinforced by the lack of substructure at decreasing scales.[12] Gehry avoids any scaling similarity by using smooth metallic skin.[13]

In the 1920s, modernist architects who were driven by an ideological fanaticism to dismantle the world's architectural traditions used industrial materials. Gehry uses them for the same disconnecting purpose. For example, his Prague office building has two towers — one solid and the other glass. Glass walls and polished metal surfaces generate anxiety, because the eye cannot focus on the surface — the former is transparent, whereas the latter is mirror reflective. In addition, such surfaces do not produce any sensory input from touching. Industrial surfaces are alien to nature and therefore hostile to the touch. This effect is by no means limited to a strictly sensual reaction, but is due to visual and tactile perception of the material surfaces' microstructure.

Some contemporary art long ago graduated from avant-garde silliness to launch an aggressive attack on aesthetics. Invoking physical revulsion — in a clever ploy to emotionally validate its nonexistent content — was a way for artists to attract media attention. This is reflected in the architecture of the new museums, which explains their puzzling resemblance to memorials to mass murder. Thus, the same design approach is applied by Daniel Libeskind in his Jewish Museum in Berlin (which commemorates the Holocaust), and to his proposed extension for the Victoria and

11. Similar is the case with an office building in Prague also designed by Gehry, where the windows are carefully *misaligned* in both vertical and horizontal directions, as well as in their depth and attachment to the façade (which itself is strangely distorted for no apparent reason), and their internal structure made inconsistent so as to avoid coherence. Gehry explains: "I worked very hard trying to devise a window that looked like it was attacking the form. . . . I thought of it like a swarm of bees coming at a wall." See Mildred Friedman, ed., *Gehry Talks* (New York: Rizzoli, 1999), p. 210. Gehry also reversed the natural progression of small to large as elements approach the ground, so that the windows actually get larger as they get higher.

12. Christopher Alexander, *The Phenomenon of Life: The Nature of Order, Book 1* (Berkeley, California: The Center for Environmental Structure, 2001). See also Nikos A. Salingaros, "A Scientific Basis for Creating Architectural Forms," in *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, Vol. 15, 1998, pp. 283-293.

13. Nikos A. Salingaros, "Hierarchical Cooperation in Architecture, and the Mathematical Necessity for Ornament," in *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, Vol 17, 2000, pp. 221-235. In his Prague office building, each window could be roughly similar to the entire façade when scaled up by a factor of 10, but this is far too large a factor, so the two scales remain visually disconnected. Alexander, *The Phenomenon of Life*, *op. cit.* See also Salingaros, "A Scientific Basis for Creating Architectural Forms," *op. cit.*, and "Hierarchical Cooperation in Architecture, and the Mathematical Necessity for Ornament," *op. cit.*

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Albert Museum in London. The playful innovations by a small group of architects riding a wave of stylistic fashion for fame and profit are neither benign nor innocent.[14] These architects erect huge deconstructionist symbols everywhere, thus becoming instrumental in propagating the virus.[15]

Deconstructionist buildings resemble ruins whose structure has been somehow violated: Warsaw, Dresden, and Hiroshima immediately after their bombing; buildings after a major earthquake; 9/11, etc. These structures encode their physical violation in what remains of their destroyed form, and this quality is sought by some deconstructionist architects. Industrial materials tend to produce jagged, fragmented ruins that remain so, because they weather very poorly or not at all. But the weathering of natural materials generates an altogether different type of ruin, one in which time and nature — often helped by human interventions at reinforcing and partially restoring what is left of the structure — try to minimize the form's violation.

Derrida's virus infected contemporary architecture even before the latest deconstructionist fashion. Its impact can be seen in "postmodern" buildings (popular between 1965 and 1985, and thus contemporary with deconstruction's spread in philosophy and literature). They are marked by the assembly of non-cooperating, but identifiable architectural elements. That is exactly what the Derrida virus does when it acts on architecture as a whole, rather than dismantling a single concept for an individual building. It uses a haphazard repertory of pieces taken from various older buildings, historical styles, and materials, and carefully reassembles them in a manner that avoids combinatorial coherence.

Reactions to postmodern buildings, such as James Stirling's Neue

14. Alarmingly, other museums are planning new additions to house genuine art in such uncompromisingly hostile environments. See Hanson & Salingaros, "Death, Life, and Libeskind," *op. cit.*

15. When all is said and done, deconstruction in architecture is merely a continuation — after a lengthy pause — of the 1920s' Constructivist movement, exemplified by Konstantin Melnikov's Rusakov Club for the Transport Worker's Union in Moscow, and Vladimir Tatlin's unbuilt Monument to the Third International Communist Congress. The post-revolutionary Russian avant-garde married radical politics to a style of broken architecture. It is hard to find intentional dislocation in architecture before the Constructivist movement (and its contemporary, the Bauhaus movement in Germany). In *A Dictionary of Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 162-163, James Stevens Curl defines this movement as follows: "*Constructivism*: Anti-aesthetic, anti-art, supposedly pro-technology, Left-wing movement originating in the USSR . . . . Russian Constructivism's anti-environmentalist aspects, jagged overlapping diagonal forms, expression of mechanical elements, have proved to be potent precedents . . . for the followers of Deconstructivism, notably Hadid, Koolhaas, and Libeskind."

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Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, are not as alarming as those to deconstructionist buildings, because the Derrida virus operates on fewer scales. The whole is disturbing in the way it is put together (actually, *not* put together), but the pieces seem unobjectionable and even attractive. Since smaller elements are copied from genuine architectural styles, they tend to be coherent on their smaller, internal scales. In the postmodernist case, disorder is manifested only on the larger scale, which is incoherent. In the deconstructionist case, the Derrida virus acts on many different scales, so that even smaller architectural elements are randomized. Again, randomization needs to stop somewhere, otherwise the building becomes unusable. Unlike modern architects, who work with a very restricted, though often strongly coherent stylistic vocabulary, postmodern architects are open to using a variety of architectural elements torn out of context from all periods. By rejecting any context, rather than working within any coherent style, postmodern architects always chose to apply classical and other historical quotations with "ironic" intentions, i.e., never as genuine tectonic elements, and thus never attaining (by design) the balance and connectivity of traditional architecture.

After their initial infatuation with deconstruction, some architects have turned to other, wierder influences for design inspiration, such as blobs and folding. Yet, the pervasiveness of deconstruction has not allowed any genuinely adaptive architecture to emerge. The Derrida virus is still at work. Many architects desperately try to innovate, while studiously avoiding human needs, because these point in the direction of traditional, pre-modern architecture.[16] The most disturbing development is cutting-edge architects, who profess to embrace the "New Sciences" predicated on buzzwords, such as fractals, complexity, emergence, chaos, self-organization, Darwinian processes, etc.

Trusting the Architectural Experts

A biological virus has to overcome a cell's defenses in order to enter it and manipulate it to produce copies of itself. The Derrida virus is one of many social viruses that act through human agents. People are predisposed to reject illogical belief systems that contradict common sense and

16. Comfortable, pleasing architecture that resembles older non-modern buildings is taboo for ideological reasons. It is vilified by the architectural establishment. This is the dark secret of contemporary architecture: a cover of questionable innovation hides a doctrine of hatred of traditional forms. Unfortunately, most people are ignorant of what goes on inside the closed architectural establishment.

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intuition. They have built-in defenses against being taken over by destructive doctrines (although cults successfully override this mechanism). A telltale sign of cults trying to assume power is hearing that common sense is unreliable, and that "experts" should be trusted instead. Self-proclaimed experts present themselves as having superior knowledge, based on abstruse philosophical texts, written in an incomprehensible esoteric language. Any claims that experts possess intelligence and knowledge that contradict (rather than reinforce, extend, or, better, explain) our ordinary perception are classic setups for indoctrination.

A small group of promoters everywhere praise deconstructive buildings. Clients rely on them for advice in choosing fashionable architects. The media repeatedly turn to those same people for architectural criticism. They, again, sit on juries that award architectural prizes. They are all certified "experts," who perpetuate a wave of architectural fashion by undermining commonsense public understanding of what is real and what makes sense. Having attracted attention, self-proclaimed architectural experts lash out at whatever threatens their ideals, namely traditional architecture that embodies traditional values. They label what they personally dislike as old-fashioned, unexciting, retrograde, reactionary, dangerous, fascist, etc. This reverses commonsense values, while calling for the extinction of all that is intuitively perceived as right.[17]

Because of the costs of major architectural projects, the power politics played out in this arena can make or break people. It has nothing to do with style, but has always been that way because of economics. Contemporary architecture reveals a frightening picture of raw power, in which global architectural fashion is driven by a small group of power brokers.[18] They influence the architectural media, decide on many of the major architectural commissions, and control who is appointed in key academic positions in architectural schools. Architecture favors the propagation of almost any style, once a few well-placed people have adopted it. Boundless ambitions, an immense power base, various architects tied together by obligations, loyalty, mutual loathing, and the exchange of favors, threats, deals, and payoffs, shameless self-promotion, lucrative commissions — all of these elements constitute an unholy alliance that promotes a global architectural fashion. Now, this political machine is working to propagate the Derrida virus.

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17. Ian McFadyen, *Mind Wars* (St. Leonards, NSW, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2000).

18. Franz Schulze, *Philip Johnson: Life and Work* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994). This biography of the architect Philip Johnson draws on earlier published material, in particular John Brodie, "Master Philip and the Boys," in *Spy* (May 1991), pp. 50-58.

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Deconstructive architecture was put on the map by an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, organized by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley in 1988. While some of the architects featured there had already established their reputation, Johnson first brought them together under the common "Deconstructive" label, and launched that style on a global scale.[19] This event had a tremendous effect in validating — or manufacturing — the new style, for it was the same Johnson who back in 1932 had launched the "International Style," also by an exhibit of that name at the Museum of Modern Art. The modernist style went on to conquer the entire world, establishing Johnson as the power broker who defined the built environment for the better part of the 20th century.[20]

In a striking parallel with the case of Paul de Man in literary deconstruction, Johnson, the figure instrumental in launching deconstructive architecture, was compromised by pro-Nazi sympathies as a young man.[21] He had attended two Nazi political rallies where Hitler spoke (Potsdam in 1932 and Nuremberg in 1938), and followed the Wehrmacht when it invaded Poland — by invitation of the German Propaganda Ministry — as a correspondent for a right-wing American publication. This did not affect his standing within the architectural community. What is interesting here is not what Johnson did in his past, but rather what attracted him to deconstructive architecture.[22] The catalogue for the Deconstructionist Architecture show at the Museum of Modern Art explains that deconstructionists architecture "disturbs figures from within . . . It is as if some kind of parasite has infected the

19. The show included projects by Bernard Tschumi and the team Coop Himmelblau (comprised of Wolf Prix and Helmut Zwiczinsky).

20. On that earlier occasion, Johnson's assistant was Henry-Russell Hitchcock. See Schulze, *Philip Johnson: Life and Work*, *op. cit.*

21. Eisenman claims that what motivated the then 82-year old Johnson to try his hand a second time at creating a new architectural style is that: ". . . he wants to go out . . . with a jump that puts him back in favor with the left, or what is thought to be left intellectually, in other words so he's not seen as someone of the right . . . he has always been worried about the left and I think this is one time where he maybe is co-opting the left." See Jencks, "Interview of Peter Eisenman," *op. cit.* See also Michael Sorkin, *Exquisite Corpse* (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 307-11.

22. In a 1994 interview, Johnson said: "My philosophical outlook dates from a time and a way of thinking that differs from the liberal, acceptable, politically correct line that we all subscribe to today . . . There is no such thing as the good or the true or the beautiful. I'm a relativist. I'm a nihilist . . . I learned the German language, when I was young, because I was interested in reading Nietzsche . . . That's why I was initially attracted to Hitler, who totally misunderstood Nietzsche, really. But there was enough similarity between them so I got very excited about it . . . The hierarchy of important things in the world starts with art, not with looking for truth, or science, or anything." See Hilary Lewis and John O'Connor, *Philip Johnson: The Architect in His Own Words* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994), p. 175.

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form and distorted it from inside . . . The alien is an outgrowth of the very form it violates."[23] This is the Derrida virus but, disingenuously, the catalogue denies any connection between the architectural style and Derrida's philosophy.[24] This dangerous intellectual game is rooted in a nihilistic philosophy, and supported by an immense power base.[25] Respected architects — who have previously demonstrated their skill in putting materials together to create a coherent, habitable form — are now calling for destruction.[26]

A 1939 letter recounts Johnson's impressions of the German invasion of Poland: "Everything was fine and dandy in Berlin when I left . . . I came again to the country that we had motored through, the towns north of Warsaw . . . The German green uniforms made the place look gay and happy. There were not many Jews to be seen. We saw Warsaw burn and Modlin being bombed. It was a stirring spectacle."[27] Now, "stirring" is surely an odd term to describe destruction and slaughter on a massive scale. More that half a century later, his wartime memories still triggered the same sentiment: ". . . the burned-out village was in the Second World War, and I was on the wrong side. So we don't talk about that anymore . . . But it was a horrifying sight . . . And it was so beautiful. That's a horrible thing to say, but ruins are beautiful. You can't help it. Fascination with ruins, it's endless."[28]

The Museum of Modern Art show was organized in 1988. By now, deconstructive architecture has gained its own momentum, and any questions raised about the circumstances of its birth are only of historical interest. Johnson may have given it a boost, but its current popularity is due to genuine client demand. Derrida responded to the charges that deconstructive architecture is a pure expression of nihilism. True to form, he employs the standard strategy of confusing the issue by dissolving the meaning of words: "And who knows what nihilism is or isn't? Even the

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23. Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, *Deconstructivist Architecture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1988), pp. 16-17.

24. As Roger Kimball points out about this catalogue in *Tenured Radicals* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), p. 136: : "The lurid overtones of violence and corruption are intentional; they are, in fact, central to the ethos of deconstructive architecture . . . Disturb, torture, interrogate, contaminate, infect: these are the words [chosen] to explain and to praise deconstructivist architecture."

25. To be fair to some architectural critics, they initially labelled deconstructionist architecture as nihilistic. Later on, however, they had to "toe the line" or be out of a job, so they are now among its most fervent supporters.

26. Kazys Varnelis, "We Cannot Not Know History," in *Journal of Architectural Education*, Vol. 49/2 (1995), pp. 92-104.

27. Schulze, *Philip Johnson: Life and Work*, *op. cit.*, page 139.

28. Lewis and O'Connor, *Philip Johnson, op. cit.*, p. 33.

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people who object don't raise the question 'What is nihilism?' . . . So when people say [Deconstruction] is negative, nihilistic and so forth, either they don't read or they are arguing in bad faith."[29]

The Traditional Patrimony

Some traditions are anachronistic and misguided, but as reservoirs of solutions against which to check new proposals they are of immense importance. A new solution may at some point replace a traditional solution, but it must succeed in reestablishing the connections to the rest of knowledge. In the context of social patterns, architecture, and urbanism, new solutions are useful if they connect to traditional social, architectural, and urban patterns (i.e., all those before the 1920s). If there is an obvious gap where nothing in a discipline refers to anything outside, then there could be a serious problem.

Recently, Edward Wilson introduced the notion of "consilience" as "the interlocking of causal explanations across disciplines."[30] Consilience claims that all explanations in nature are connected; there are no totally isolated phenomena. Wilson focusses on incomplete pieces of knowledge: the wide region separating the sciences from the humanities. He is happy to see it being slowly filled in by evolutionary biologists, cognitive neuroscientists, and researchers in artificial intelligence. At the same time, he is alarmed by people in the humanities who are erasing parts of the existing body of knowledge. These include deconstructive philosophers.[31] Unfortunately, most of the humanities today subscribe to belief systems that damage the web of consilient knowledge. Although never directly expressed, the goal of deconstruction is to erase institutions of knowledge. Many people crave novelty without regard for possible con-sequences. This craving is often manipulated by unscrupulous individuals. Not everything that is novel is necessarily good.[32]

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29. Norris, "Interview of Jacques Derrida," *op. cit.*

30. Edward O. Wilson, "Integrating Science and the Coming Century of the Environment," in *Science*, Vol. 279, 1998, pp. 2048-2049.

31. Wilson characterizes deconstructionist efforts as based on ignorance. On Derrida's work, he writes: "It . . . is the opposite of science, rendered in fragments with the incoherence of a dream, at once banal and fantastical. It is innocent of the science of mind and language developed elsewhere in the civilized world, rather like the pronouncements of a faith healer unaware of the location of the pancreas." See Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), p. 41.

32. What Derrida has said is alarming enough: "Deconstruction goes through certain social and political structures, meeting with resistance and displacing institutions as it does so . . . effectively, you have to displace, I would say 'solid' structures, not only in the sense of material structures, but 'solid' in the sense of cultural, pedagogical, political, economic structures." See Norris, "Interview of Jacques Derrida," *op. cit.*, p. 8.

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An example of this is a new, artificially-developed virus unleashed into the world. Because of the immense destructive power that humanity now possesses, it is imperative to understand possible consequences.

In a hilarious hoax, Alan Sokal developed a nonsensical deconstructive critique of well-known scientific claims in an article submitted for publication to a pretentious, deconstructive journal.[33] None of the referees for that journal challenged Sokal's account before accepting the article for publication. Sokal was so obvious in his deception that he assumed it would have been exposed; but it was not.[34] Putting aside the question of truthful content, a discipline is not valid unless it rests on a solid intellectual edifice.[35] One characteristic of a coherent discipline is hierarchical complexity, in which correlated ideas and results define a unique internal structure. Like a valid bank note, this structure should be extremely difficult to counterfeit. That is not the case with deconstruction.

A well-crafted deconstructive text does make sense, but not in any logical fashion. It is a piece of poetry that abuses the human capacity for pattern recognition to create associations, employing random technical jargon. As Roger Scruton has pointed out: "Deconstruction . . . should be understood on the model of magic incantation. Incantations are not arguments, and avoid completed thoughts and finished sentences. They depend on crucial terms, which derive their effect from repetition, and from their appearance in long lists of cryptic syllables. Their purpose is not to describe what is there, but to summon what is not there . . . Incantations can do their work

33. Alan Sokal, "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity," in *Social Text*, Vol. 46/47, 1996, pp. 217-252. Subsequently, Sokal and Jean Bricmont exposed deconstructionist criticism as nonsensical and showed that several respected deconstructive texts are based on nonsensical scientific references. See Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont, *Fashionable Nonsense* (New York: Picador, 1998).

34. This is only the most famous exposure of nonsensical deconstructive writings. See John Huth, "Latour's Relativity," in Noretta Koertge, ed., *A House Built on Sand* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 181-192. In a debunking of deconstructionist texts, Andrew Bulhak codified the deconstructionists' literary style into a computer program. It is remarkably successful in generating nonsensical texts that are indistinguishable from those written by revered deconstructionist philosophers. See Andrew Bulhak, *Postmodernism Generator* (1996), available at www.elsewhere.org/cgi-bin/postmodern.

35. Thus, a phony article in Statistical Mechanics, using all the appropriate words and mathematical symbols in a nice-sounding but scientifically-meaningless jumble, would be detected instantly. Even a single mistake in such an article could not survive unnoticed. It is the function of referees to check each and every step in the argument of a scientific article submitted for publication in a professional journal. The very survival of the discipline depends on a system of checks that identifies and expels bogus contributions. By contrast, the survival of deconstruction — in which there is nothing to verify — depends upon generating more and more deconstructed texts and buildings.

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only if key words and phrases acquire a mystical penumbra."[36] Even after the exposure of the deconstructive philosophers' fraudulent character, their work continues to be taken seriously. Deconstructionist books are available in any university bookstore, while respectable academics offer lengthy critical commentary supporting these books' supposed authority. By affording them the trappings of scholarly inquiry, the impression is carefully maintained that they constitute a valid body of work.

Followers of deconstruction apply the classic techniques of cults to seize academic positions; infiltrate the literature; displace competitors; establish a power base by employing propaganda and manipulating the media, etc. They use indoctrination to recruit followers, usually from among disaffected students in the humanities. As David Lehman put it: "An anti-theological theology, [deconstruction]. . . shrouds itself in cabalistic mysteries and rituals as elaborate as those of a religious ceremony . . . it is determined to show that the ideals and values by which we live are not natural and inevitable but are artificial constructions, arbitrary choices that ought to have no power to command us. Yet, like a religion-substitute, deconstruction employs an arcane vocabulary seemingly designed to keep the laity in a state of permanent mystification. Putatively antidogmatic, it has become a dogma. Founded on extreme skepticism and disbelief, it attracts true believers and demands their total immersion."[37]

The De Man Heritage and its Consequences

In 1941, the late Paul de Man, the most accomplished literary deconstructionist, wrote some very direct, undeconstructed prose: ". . . despite the Semitic meddling into all aspects of European life . . . a solution to the Jewish question which envisions the creation of a Jewish colony isolated from Europe would not involve deplorable consequences for the literary life of the West. It would lose, all told, a few personalities of mediocre value . . . the war will only bring about a more intimate union of two things that have always been close, the Hitlerian soul and the German soul, until they have been made one single and unique power . . . the future of Europe can be envisioned only within the framework of the possibilities and needs of the German spirit

36. Scruton, *An Intelligent Person's Guide to Modern Culture*, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-142. The use of words for emotional effect is a common technique of cult indoctrination. This practice reinforces the cult's message. Whether in chants that make little sense yet can raise followers' emotions to fever pitch, or in the speeches of political demagogues that rouse a wild and passionate allegiance, the emotional manipulation *is* the message.

37. David Lehman, *Signs of the Times: Deconstruction and the Fall of Paul de Man* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1991), p. 55.

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. . . a people which finds itself called upon to exercise, in its turn, a hegemony in Europe."[38] These statements no longer shock, as they did when they were rediscovered after de Man's death. Neither does the cover-up that followed his exposure. Derrida (who is Jewish) tried to deconstruct de Man's anti-Semitic and pro- Nazi writings so that their original meaning was obscured by a fog of "interpretation." Like a cult, deconstructionists closed ranks and vilified journalists who reported on the de Man case.

For Lehman, the danger of deconstructivism was demonstrated not merely by de Man's youthful writings, but much more so by the denial brought into play by his surviving peers: "How benign a method could [deconstruction] be if its proponents could so blatantly use it to explain away inconvenient facts and turn an unfortunate truth on its head? . . . Over this fallen idol the self-styled iconoclasts revealed themselves to be, after all, a thoroughly idolatrous crew."[39] In viral terms, infection occurs because the virus possesses an attractive shell, which it offers to its host. No host would knowingly allow a virus to enter it, but is invariably tricked into doing so. Biological viruses possess an exterior protein that the cell finds metabolically attractive, and so ingests them; some computer viruses are encapsulated in a message purportedly coming from a friend; the Derrida virus promises "liberation from oppressive hegemony," itself a relic of the 1968 slogans in France. This alternation of a destructive doctrine with a false promise of liberation is a recurring theme of revolutionary movements that have periodically scourged humanity. To the extent that it threatens to destroy everything else, deconstruction is not simply a worldview among others. Deconstruction takes advantage of a bad misunderstanding, which confuses multiculturalism with nihilism. A method to erase knowledge, masquerading as a new philosophical movement, cannot be quarantined within academia. Indoctrinated students eventually enter the real world threatening to create havoc.

Deconstruction involves a will to destroy. Much of it comes from absolutizing subjectivity. Shut off from the outside world, the individual is locked in an internal version of reality prone to corruption. Deconstruction seeks to achieve precisely this end: isolation, then

38. Cited in Kimball, *Tenured Radicals*, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97.

39. Lehman, *Signs of the Times*, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-43. Consider the following parallels. As with deconstruction, the Nazi concept of science was relative: Jewish scientists were excluded, whereas racial pseudoscientists were legitimated. This attitude is overshadowed by the chillingly effective use the Nazis made of technology, and exemplifies nihilism, since it is predicated on an underlying duality of dominance/destruction. Thus, when he realized he was losing the war, Hitler ordered the levelling of Paris (which, fortunately, never happened).

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corruption. Deconstruction isolates itself in order to protect its secret of a nonexistent content. It spins a cocoon of incomprehensibility as a defense mechanism. Unfortunately, modern physics set a dangerous precedent when it stopped making sense and no longer related to everyday experience. It made sense in a different dimension, a different scale in space and time, even though its observable consequences constitute the physical universe. As a result, its legacy is that of formal systems that contradict common sense. Taking this as its point of departure, deconstruction devalues common sense and rejects customary wisdom. It declares everything that falls short of formal proof to be irrational, but then provides an irrational formal structure to replace what it has destroyed. As a virus, it has invaded civilization, erasing collective common sense, while spreading with astonishing rapidity.

Once formed, worldviews are unlikely to change, and are trusted more than direct sensory evidence. These internal worldviews become so much a part of oneself that they are unlikely to undergo any modification, unless one is forced to do so. For this reason, those who have adopted a cult philosophy deny all evidence that threatens the cult's vision of reality. Rational arguments make no difference. Jared Diamond asked: "Why do some societies make disastrous decisions?"[40] He was surprised to find that the most common answers assume that human beings have an innate reality check that prevents disastrous decisions. Yet, historically this has not been the case. Human beings seem inclined to fall into a kind of uncritical group think. The failure of the resulting group decisions has often led to the collapse of entire civilizations.

Consider the case of architecture. The buildings of some deconstructivist architects have been called unusable, even by critics who usually support this group. Yet, those architects continue to win coveted

40. Jared Diamond, "Why do Some Societies Make Disastrous Decisions," *The Lewis Thomas Prize Lecture*, Rockefeller Institute, New York City, March 2003. See *Edge: The Third Culture*, 2003. Available only at www.edge.org/documents/archive/edge.114.html. According to Diamond: (1) Short-term gains often ignore possible long-term losses. A decision-making elite may advance its own interests to the detriment of society at large; (2) People tend to be fanatically attached to irrational and self-serving beliefs, linking them to values they hold sacred; they tolerate no challenges and ignore their negative consequences; (3) There is often denial of mounting evidence of a disaster, because the truth, or coming events, are too horrible to contemplate; (4) Signals pointing to a problem are not taken seriously. Previous disasters that arose under similar conditions are conveniently forgotten; society concentrates on the present and ignores its past; (5) A novel threat is dismissed by assuming the continuity of a comfortable familiar situation (i.e., an unfounded belief in the inertia of the system), even knowing that change is often unexpected and discontinuous. These indicators help to understand why deconstruction has been embraced so broadly.

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commissions and international competitions. They are eagerly sought out by private clients, foundations, corporations, churches, and foreign governments, and are routinely invited to submit entries by the sponsors of major global architectural projects. Having built one dud, they are immediately begged to construct another. Their work is validated because they are awarded the most prestigious architectural prizes. They hold the most lucrative academic appointments and train tomorrow's generation of architects. They are invited to lecture at other institutions, even though their talks invariably make little sense. They present a confusing jumble of disjointed ideas and irrelevant imagery expressed in the approved jargon — usually nothing more than a self-serving attempt to justify their own buildings after the fact. These lectures are then published and studied as if something meaningful was being communicated.

Clients have bought into this deception, associating deconstruction with excitement and progress, rather than with viruses and nihilism. Eventually, they pass on: individual sponsors die (which is why they wish to be memorialized by architectural statements); decision-makers at foundations and corporations move elsewhere; university deans become vice-presidents at other institutions; mayors are not reelected; cabinet ministers are replaced; governments change. But architectural forms infected with the Derrida virus remain. Those who made the initial decision to build them (often against the outcry of citizens and architects with uncorrupted common sense), though responsible, cannot be held to account or even traced.

As deconstruction is fast becoming institutionalized, its containment is a political problem. Regardless of who made the decision to build a deconstructive building or hire a deconstructive architect, the highest power (companies; universities; foundations; cities; churches; countries) is ultimately identified with the final result. Converting an architecture school into a training ground for deconstructionists implicates the whole university. Building a National Museum as a showcase to the world implicates the entire nation. Building a church in this style anoints nihilism with the blessing of organized religion. To admit that it had all been a bad mistake makes the entity look foolish. Institutions are understandably unwilling to lose face, because their existence relies on their ability to make wise decisions. Therefore, they might not be ready to question their original choice, and continue to praise the style in order to cover themselves. By so doing, those high-level institutions promote the Derrida virus by giving it a visual form, and by condoning it, they reinforce its propagation.

An effective strategy for defending institutions against the Derrida

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virus could be formulated once its weak points are understood. A virus reduces structural order. It is the simplest form of organized matter that manages to reproduce. Below a certain complexity threshold, structures cannot really be alive. A virus lies close below this threshold and is parasitic on more complex structures. The only way to stop the Derrida virus is to fight it on its own terms, and not on the level of intellectual debate. That is a mistake several authors have made. They have dealt what ought to have been devastating blows to deconstruction, yet it survives unscathed. The virus is unaffected, because it is neither alive nor dead. It is not complex enough to destroy by trying to take apart. Derrida said as much, but no one paid sufficient attention.[41] Since the virus is not alive, it cannot be killed, so it makes no sense to attack it with either ridicule or with logical criteria such as truth and consistency. Those techniques are suited to falsifying and dismantling infinitely more complex systems, which have a corresponding vulnerability. The Derrida virus is simply a piece of information encoded in human neuronal circuits and in the external physical environment. It resides in the minds of indoctrinated individuals programmed to spread it, and in buildings and texts that infect through visual systems. The only way to stop it, therefore, is to stop its modes of informational transmission.

Deconstruction in architecture follows the methods of disintegration and incoherent reassembly of its philosophical/literary parent. Its founder, Derrida, admits that he intentionally introduced a virus into the collective subconscious. Applications of this method have generated a vast amount of deconstructed text and a number of deconstructed buildings. The deconstructionists' exclusionary practices in architecture have almost succeeded in eliminating all traditional architecture from consideration. The technique is to brand traditional architecture "bad," retrograde, non-innovative, fascist, an impediment to progress, etc. This proscription includes new and innovative architecture that somehow resembles traditional architecture. It is unlikely that those converted to deconstruction can be persuaded to abandon their irrational path. Sanity and rationality, however, are likely to be restored among future generations of architects.

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41. "[The virus] is something that is neither living nor non-living; the virus is not a microbe. And if you follow these two threads, that of a parasite which disrupts destination from the communicative point of view — disrupting writing, inscription, and the coding and decoding of inscription — and which on the other hand is neither alive nor dead, you have the matrix . . . I allude to the possible intersection between AIDS and the computer virus . . . ." See Brunette & Wills, *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts, op. cit.*, p. 12.

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Why Le Pen Will Not Go Away

Frank Adler

How is it that despite posting, year after year, the worst approval ratings of any major French politician, Jean-Marie Le Pen appears to be getting stronger, not weaker? The last survey conducted by TNS Sofres in late November 2003, entitled "The French and the Front National," did not significantly deviate from a pattern well-known to students of the Far Right in France. To the question regarding how the positions Le Pen took on major issues should be judged, 84% of respondents considered them either "excessive" (42%) or "unacceptable" (42%). To the question regarding whether or not Le Pen and the Front National (FN) were dangers for democracy and for France, 70% responded affirmatively. To the question whether respondents had a good or bad opinion of Le Pen, 28% answered rather bad, and 50% very bad. Asked how they would react in the coming regional elections, if a FN candidate were elected President of a Regional Council, 28% indicated this would be "inadmissible," and 40% would find it "shocking." It is true that respondents agreed with claims similar to some that Le Pen has made over the years: 71% agree that courts are not severe enough with petty crime; 70% agree that traditional values are not sufficiently defended; 59% agree that there are too many immigrants in France; 53% agree that the police should be given more power. However, despite the fact that journalists consistently misconstrue such responses as agreement with Le Pen, one could well imagine respondents agreeing with these claims for quite legitimate reasons other than the fact that Le Pen, too, supports them, especially when responses to other questions in the survey clearly indicate that they do not approve or support Le Pen.

This means that Le Pen's success may have only been apparent: it is

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not that he has become stronger, but that traditional politicians, the dominant political parties, and the French political system have become weaker. Who benefits more from a crisis of the system than the demonized outsider, who all along has said that the political class was rotten and that the system was headed for disaster? Who else can those who have concerns about the attendant problems of immigration and crime vote for, when the dominant parties appear so unresponsive or incompetent? In fact, there is good reason to suspect that a very substantial segment of Le Pen's electorate is more inclined to vote against other parties than to enthusiastically vote for him. Le Pen has said or done nothing new at all, but rather has passively watched French politics unravel to his benefit.

The Regional Elections

The major question raised by the regional elections in March 2004 is whether or not the FN will build upon its previous success of April 21, 2002, when Le Pen surpassed the sitting Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, and made it into a run-off round against incumbent Jacques Chirac. To the degree that any press attention is given to the main political parties — the Socialists, the moderate right UMP or the centrist UDF — the concern has been whether or not Le Pen's party can be contained. Usually, regional elections are of lesser significance and concern primarily local issues. This time, however, Le Pen set out to "nationalize" them in the form of a referendum on the performance of the national government presided over by President Chirac and Prime Minister Raffarin, much like an American-style mid-term election. This strategy, later adopted by the Socialists, appears well matched to current public opinion. According to a Sofres poll published in *Le Monde* (January 22, 2004), 65% of French voters intend to use the regional elections as a means through which to express their discontent with the government. Until a slight and perhaps temporary upturn in public approval registered in January, satisfaction with the President, the Prime Minister and the governing UMP had declined steadily throughout 2003, reflecting the mishandling of the summer heat wave (during which 15,000 people died), the inability to stimulate growth, reduce unemployment or deliver on the program of reforms promised during the 2002 legislative elections. Thus, Raffarin's approval rating plummeted 29 points during 2003, from 58% in January to 29% in December. Ordinarily the failure of the Right would create a golden opportunity for the Left, but the French Left is divided, leaderless and has presented no alternative program; small wonder it has yet to generate any enthusiasm or even mobilize its traditional constituents.

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Given these circumstances, where, on the one hand, the dominant parties offer nothing, and, on the other, the problems which face France are so pressing, the split between the political establishment and the electorate, noted by all political analysts in the wake of the April 21, 2002 presidential election, appears to be growing. During 2003, two important books by serious political observers captured the prevailing mood of pessimism, uncertainty, and disquiet: Alain Duhamel's *Le désarroi français* (*The Troubled French*) and Nicolas Baverez's *La France qui tombe* (*France in Decline*).[1] Duhamel, less severe in his pessimism than Baverz, nevertheless describes a nation which "doubts itself, its leaders, its mechanisms, its structures, its weight. Its identity is confused. It no longer knows who it is, where it is going, where it stands on the international scene, what is its vocation, its ambition, its specificity."[2] *Les trente glorieuses*, the great economic transformation that followed WWII, generated a model which is quickly eroding in the face of globalization, one of full employment, generous welfare provisions, high-quality health care, expanded educational opportunities, increased social mobility, and exceptional social services. Both Duhamel and Baverez emphasize the singular failure of France to modernize its economy and scale back social entitlements,which simply cannot be sustained at present levels, contrasting French *immobilisme* with reforms adopted in Great Britain and especially, more recently, in Germany (Agenda 2010). In the Swiss-based World Economic Forum index of international competitiveness, France fell from the rank of 20 to 30, placed between Hungary and Thailand. There was no economic growth in 2003, and unemployment hovered near 10% (unemployment among those under the age of twenty-five is 26%, the highest in Europe). Despite a larger budget and more personnel than ever, French schools are in a state of crisis, producing a greater number of functional illiterates than ever before, while enrollments in private schools are at a record high. French higher education, according to a new study by Elie Cohen and Philippe Aghion, commisioned by the CAE (Council of Economic Analysis), found that France had fallen to the status of a "*pays d'imitation*," where an archaic system of instruction had become an obstacle to economic growth. According to Elie Cohen, "France today has no future. Nicolas Baverez is right."[3] One could easily continue with a

1. Nicolas Baverez, *La France qui tombe* (Paris: Perrin, 2003); Alain Duhamel, *Le désarroi français* (Paris: Plon, 2003).
2. Duhamel, *Le désarroi*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
3. *Le Monde* (January 20, 2004).

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dreary recitation of dismal data and projections, but the point is clear: one by one, the pillars of French life, as people conventionally lived it, are collapsing: job security, health insurance, pensions, education. Add to that crime, violence, the extension of zones *de non droit* (lawless behavior in public transportation, schools, hospitals, recreational facilities) and a court system whose disapproval index rose to 60% in a recent IPSOS survey, and the picture becomes even more bleak, without even mentioning, as yet, the hot button issues of immigration, Islam, the veil-law controversy, and anti-Semitism. According to Bavarez, the famous *exception française* has become little more than a threadbare cover for *immobilisme*.

There is no reason to believe that the French are either incapable or hostile to reform; in fact, a recent survey that TNS-Sofres conducted for *Le Figaro Magazine* (January 17, 2004) concluded that France, even those on the Left, appears open to "liberal" change regarding such issues as individual responsibility, merit, police intervention in schools, curfews for minors, and more severe punishments for crime. Except for a comparatively modest pension reform, nevertheless contested by the trade unions in the form of strikes and street demonstrations that quickly lost public support, and a significant reduction in crime, attributed more to the independent-minded Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy than to the government, the UMP has accomplished remarkably little, despite the fact that it commands an absolute majority in Parliament and can do pretty much what it wants. For their part, the Socialists have remained in a coma since April 21st, reacting passively to initiatives put forward by the government, never enunciating programmatic alternatives. In the March regional elections, they will be running, as spokesman Jack Lang put it, against the "Thatcherization of France," as if the UMP had any comparable programmatic imagination and will, as well as the defense of social entitlements, the famous *acquis social*, without actually saying how they would address deficits that have grown totally out of control. Unlike Germany, where the two dominant parties reached a difficult consensus regarding reforms, nothing of the sort is on the French horizon. Neither party dares propose an honest assessment of the situation; neither party dares assume responsibility for draconian reforms that inevitably would become targets of partisan denunciation.

It is within the context of this impasse that the relative success of Le Pen and the FN becomes comprehensible; hence, their new slogan: "if you liked April 21st, you will adore March 21st." Ironically, Le Pen's apparent "success" is due less to any new initiatives on his part than to this dramatic and altogether unprecedented loss of voter confidence in the

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dominant parties, the political elite, the very *établissement* that the FN leader excoriates at every opportunity. This is an important point frequently overlooked in the hyperbolic reportage that forever warns the French public about the perils of an imminent FN ascendancy, as if Le Pen is doing or saying anything new, or more importantly, *as if he has gained as much as others have lost.* When all is said and done, Le Pen's "success" in the April 21st presidential election was altogether insignificant, despite all the media hype in France and abroad. He added only 230,000 votes to the total he had achieved in his 1995 presidential effort, not particularly noteworthy and hardly an achievement that otherwise would have occasioned so much tumult.

The key to understanding the "earthquake of April 21st" lies rather in the unanticipated weakness of the two favored candidates, particularly the Socialist Jospin, neither of whom obtained 20% of the vote. In fact, Jospin and Chirac received lower scores than any previous sitting Prime Minister or President. The ruling *gauche plurielle* suffered one of the French Left's greatest humiliations, while the three Trotskyist extreme Left parties received their highest score ever, almost 10% of the vote. The combined total of the socialists and communists, pillars of the Left coalition, for the first time fell to the same level as the combined total of the extreme Right. Moreover, there had been a record number of abstentions and blank ballots, almost 30%; this in an election where the sitting Prime Minister and President received a combined score of 36%, well less than half the votes cast. Of course, there had also been a record number of presidential candidates, sixteen, which fragmented the vote as never before, especially to the detriment of the Socialists, but the startling fact remains that roughly six voters out of ten either abstained, submitted a blank ballot, or voted for one of the extreme parties. Only in the context of a general collapse of the centrist ruling parties, i.e., not by virtue of any exceptional movement on his part, does Le Pen's score of 16.9% (measured against the score of 15% he garnered in 1995) appear impressive. When he says "if you liked April 21st, you will adore March 21st," he anticipates again incremental gains at the expense of others; growing stronger, not through new programs or new efforts at mobilization, but rather through the erosion of voter confidence in the political system and particularly the established elites.

A vote for Le Pen is largely a vote against the others, not support for the FN or its leader. Those who have seriously studied this party know well, thanks to a rich array of survey data, that the FN vote is essentially a protest, not a vote for the party program, nor for the victory of FN candidates, and

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certainly not for the FN coming to power. In a blocked political system, dominated by relatively small, unaccountable, non-representative parties, one of the few ways in which the base can get a message across to party leaders is to vote for Le Pen and the FN, knowing they will not come to power, but neverthless hoping that this might affect some change in the dominant parties' stance on issues such as immigration, crime, education, and unemployment. When the "popular classes," especially workers, vote in large numbers for the FN, they do so because they feel betrayed or because their interests have been neglected by traditional Left parties, not because they deeply identify with the FN the way they once did with the Socialists and Communists. As Nonna Mayer amply demonstrated, the growing segment of FN voters, which she calls the *ninistes*, are not ideologically committed to the FN program at all, and not identifying with the Right; they are neither Right nor Left.[4] Having few fixed political views, and no political loyalties, they are disenchanted and increasingly estranged from the Left and Right dominant parties, and as likely to abstain from voting as to vote for the FN. Generally speaking, they do not participate in FN activities, and do not become party militants.

A careful examination would demonstrate the limitations of Le Pen's April 21st showing. In the second round run-off, Le Pen received only 17.8% of the vote, an increase of .9% over his first round score. For a "populist" candidate who claimed that any score under 30% would be a personal defeat, it is remarkable that no significant efforts were taken to rally disaffected voters and counter the "Stop Le Pen" mobilization, which gave Chirac a thoroughly undeserved victory. Chirac won the second round by a higher score than any other candidate in French history (82.2%), after having received the lowest score ever registered by an incumbent in the first round. This is yet another indication of political pathology, whereby an incumbent wins re-election though a mass mobilization aimed solely at stopping a demonized rival. Here, a popular political expression of the time is illustrative of the prevailing state of mind: "given the choice between a fascist and a thief, I'll always vote for the thief." In any event, Le Pen's success in the first round was clearly a personal one that did not extend to the FN as such. In the legislative elections that followed in June, the FN received only 11.3% of the vote; i.e., a drop-off of 6.5% from Le Pen's score in the second round of the presidential election, and almost 4% below the FN's 1997 tally in the previous

4. Nonna Mayer, *Ces français qui votent Le Pen* (Paris: Flammarion, 2002). This revised second edition has an excellent analysis of the Spring 2002 elections.

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legislative elections. It was even lower than the FN's score in the 1993 legislative elections (12.3%). When Bruno Mégret led a split from the FN in 1998, he took with him most of the younger, better-trained party leaders. What remained at the top was little more than the persona of Le Pen and the questionable competence of his longtime loyalists. And among these, there soon erupted a pitched battle after the 2002 elections, not only over an eventual succession (with Le Pen's daughter, Marine, and her *Génération Le Pen* organization pitted against Bruno Gollnisch and the old party hierarchs), but a strident critique by Jacques Bompard, Mayer of Orange, over the excessive *médiatisation* of the Le Pens (father and daughter). Moreover, in a stinging reference to the FN's poor showing in the 2002 legislative elections, Bompard castigated Le Pen for the failure to cultivate organizational bases at the local level, a position that had been earlier articulated by the Mégretists. Bompard even threatened to put himself forward as an alternative to Le Pen, a gesture met with caustic derision by *le chef,* recalling the fate of Mégret, the last subordinate to challenge his authority. More recently, Bernard Antony, leader of the Catholic fundamentalists within the party, close ally of Bompard and Gollnisch, and open critic of Marine Le Pen, resigned from the party's Political Bureau. Instead of movement and growth in the party, there has been stasis and the degenerative effect of personal rivalries and infighting.

When all is said and done, Le Pen has no strategy other than what he calls the *grande alternative*, whereby the FN frontally attacks the entire "rotten" (*pourri*) establishment. French voters, Le Pen argues, will eventually turn to him as things become progressively worse, viewing the FN as the only political force that addresses real issues (immigration, crime, unemployment), that has not failed, and that is not corrupt. This cataclysmic strategy was one of the fundamental issues which precipitated a split with Mégret, who advocated an alternative "Italian strategy" of alliance formation with other parties of the Right, modeled on Gianfranco Fini's transformation of the neo-fascist MSI into the post-fascist, Right-Center *Alleanza Nazionale*. Mégret argued that the FN could never break out of its political ghetto following Le Pen's lead, and would be relegated to the eternal status of a marginalized protest party; an irritant, to be sure, but permanently barred from effective political power. Mégret's project ended in abject failure. His alternative MNR was no more welcome by other formations on the Right than the FN, nor could he make inroads into the FN's electoral base. Though Mégret clearly lost the battle with Le Pen, his analysis of the FN's strategic blindness is no less valid today than it was at the time of the rupture in 1998.

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As for the one issue, lack of security, which worked to Le Pen's advantage during the first round of the 2002 presidential campaign, subsequent polls indicate a decline in its relative importance, due largely to widespread satisfaction over the performance of Nicolas "speedy" Sarkozy (or Sarko), the flamboyant, hyperactive Interior Minister, who for more than a year has enjoyed the highest approval ratings of any French politician. Sarkozy has remained popular not only on the Right, but also on the Left, and even among the FN's rank-and-file, despite remaining a prime target of Le Pen's increasingly ineffectual attacks. Yet, Sarkozy, who roundly outclassed Le Pen in two televised debates, has also so needled Chirac, and so publicly trumpeted his own presidential ambitions, that the press now refers to a "new cohabitation." In recent interviews, Sarkozy has spoken of his admiration for Tony Blair who, unlike French leaders, was capable of articulating and implementing a reform program.[5] The French political parties, he added, were twenty years behind the times, incapable of reforming the economy and, despite rhetorical commitments regarding republican equality and fighting racism, equally incapable of integrating the large North African community, elements of which have turned toward radical Islam and a new, distinctive brand of anti-Semitism.

North Africans, Islam, Anti-Semitism and the Veil

Unlike earlier European immigrants, who were easily assimilated, the North Africans, who began entering France during the 1960s, not only bore a different, more distant culture and religion, but were not easily assimilated and found themselves isolated in increasingly ghettoized housing projects, where they experienced pervasive social exclusion and failed to find adequate employment opportunities. Recruited under special labor procurement programs from the more remote rural regions of North Africa, Maghrebin workers were generally unskilled and uneducated. They were to perform the type of basic labor still essential during the 1960s, but which would decline rapidly during the 1970s. These early labor procurement programs were based on three-year rotation contracts

5. Interestly, Raffarin also expressed admiration for the dynamic leadership of social democrats Tony Blair and Gerhard Schröder. "We have to generate movement. Today, at the European level, things are moving. I am rather struck when in the presence of Tony Blair and Gerhard Schröder. I feel as if I am the one most on the Left. When I say to Schröder, 'Let's talk about employment,' he answers 'only one year of unemployment benefits.' When I say to Tony Blair, 'we must improve our health system,' he replies 'Yes, I am building private hospitals.' I then say to myself, 'Well, although they are social democrats, one can clearly see they have a different way of thinking'." See *Le Monde* (January 21, 2004).

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to meet a conjunctural labor shortage; they never anticipated permanent residence in France, or the eventual arrival of the laborers' families through family reunification provisions.

Given a traditional kinship structure based on large, extended families, and their relatively young age, the Maghrebin community grew quickly. By the late 1970s, it was already clear that they would not be as easily assimilated as earlier groups. Residentially, they became increasingly concentrated in isolated and rapidly degrading housing projects outside the great cities. Regarding employment, the labor market was moving away from unskilled jobs to those requiring higher levels of education, leading to a high level of Maghrebin unemployment, losing the jobs they had, but not qualified for those opening up. Moreover, the older "engines of integration" (public schools, the workplace, compulsory military service) had either broken down or were no longer of comparable relevance. Then, of course, there was undeniable racism against *les arabes*, well-documented in numerous studies over the past thirty years. Though the level of racism appears to be declining, it remains higher on every index toward North Africans than any other group, including sub-Saharan Africans. Television news stories as well as journalistic accounts reveal that even Maghrebin students graduating from prestigious universities, including *les grandes écoles*, are routinely turned down for interviews when they use their real names, while they are immediately scheduled when using a French-sounding pseudonym.

Of course, it is a truism that different groups respond to discrimination differently: some achieve relatively high levels of mobility, others do not. A key factor here is the level of material and cultural resources a group can mobilize. Unfortunately, the Maghrebins suffer greater discrimination and have fewer resources, the worst of all possibilities. Moreover, they have yet to generate robust, grass root associations; those that do exist are relatively weak, fragile, non-representative, and often divisive. While the initial immigrant generation tended to keep to themselves and suffer in silence, the second generation, calling themselves *beurs*, by the early 1980s began to advance claims for recognition, equality, and justice.

Whereas Islam barely figured in the construction of *beur* identity twenty years ago, and veils were not at all present in the iconography of this period, except negatively among emancipated *beurettes*, Islam and the veil now have become conspicuously present. There are no studies that empirically indicate how extensively and how intensely members of the Maghrebin community embrace Islam and the veil, so some degree of caution is

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necessary in making the sort of claims which appear regularly in the press and political discourse by those who curiously have forgotten all the previous studies indicating that the younger generation tended to identify themselves as more French than Maghreban, and, like their French counterparts, felt less religious and more secular. Nevertheless, something seems to have changed in the construction of *beur* identity among the present generation regarding Islam and the veil, to the degree that one can at least say that now they are largely present, whereas before they were largely absent.

Two factors help explain this apparent change. First, the demands for recognition, equality, and justice made by the more secular earlier *beur* generation were largely unsuccessful. Though some members of the community, especially women, were successfully integrated into French life, many, perhaps most, were not. Problems of unemployment, education, and especially delinquency grew worse among youth, who were creating a French form of separate *lumpen* "gangsta" culture in the housing projects and *quartiers arabes* — a culture more reflective of deracination and social exclusion than Islam or the Maghreb in any deep sense, despite the fact that there were markers of pan-Islamic, pan-Arabic, Palestinian or Maghrebin identity to reaffirm a connection with a related community outside France and to erect a boundary between them and "others," particularly the French, Jews, whites, the cops, and agents of authority. Yet, there are also aspects of this "culture" that affirm a new, multi-cultural France most dramatically symbolized in spontaneous celebrations that immediately followed France's 1998 World Cup victory, where those of immigrant origin, and especially the *beurs*, identified with the multi-racial, multi-ethnic French team, particularly its hero, Zinedine "Zizou" Zidane, who soon became the most popular man in France.

More recently, and indicating a change of mood, the opposite tendency was on display. At what in October 2002 was promoted as a friendship match between French and Algerian teams, televised throughout France, *La Marseillaise*, the French national anthem, was booed, mostly by Maghrebins, with cameras focused on the nervous reactions of the President, Prime Minister and other senior public officials in the VIP box. Throughout the game, the fans cheered the Algerian team and booed the French one. Then, came the most upsetting moment, with millions of French viewers watching. At the seventy-fourth minute, after the French team scored its fourth goal, thousands of Algerian fans swarmed on the field to prevent a French victory, some laying down on the grass wrapped in Algerian flags, others throwing beer bottles and other objects at the

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VIP box. At that point, the match that had been promoted as a "reconciliation between the two peoples" was suspended. No one speaks much of 1998 World Cup celebrations any longer.

The second factor regarding an apparent change in *beur* identity relates to a globalization of Islam. Muslim communities, wherever they exist, manifest greater solidarity with the faith and those who observe it; veils appear in greater number everywhere in communities residing outside the Arabo-Islamic world, including England and European countries such as France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. Due to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and US foreign policy, another unfortunate attribute of globalized Islam is anti-Semitism, not merely anti-Zionism, but the demonization of Jews: the enemy infidel, the hidden kings of capitalism. This new anti-Semitism made its initial grand appearance at the UN sponsored "World Conference against Racism, Racial discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance" held in Durban, South Africa, during September 2001. Stands outside the conference openly sold *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a book of anti-Semitic cartoons were distributed inside by a Palestinian lawyers group, and, to the dismay of its organizers, the conference was derailed and became a major embarrassment, as Zionism was condemned as a form of racism almost to the exclusion of all other concerns.

In Egypt and Saudi Arabia, major newspapers initially gave credence to the rumor that September 11th was planned by the Mossad, and that four-thousand Jews were told not to go to work in the World Trade Center. Al Quaeda and related groups demonize Jews, but so do so-called Arab moderates, such as the President of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad, whose anti-Semitic remarks were cheered by those attending the fifty-seven nation Organization of the Islamic Conference, including other "moderates" such as Afghan President Karzai who denied afterward that Mahathir's remarks were anti-Semitic. Mahathir claimed that "Jews rule the world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them." As if there were any doubt that Jews were the enemy, he went on to say that "the world's 1.3 billion Muslims cannot be defeated by a few million Jews." In 1997, Mahathir blamed the "Jew" George Soros for Malaysia's currency problems; in 1984, he forbade the visiting New York Philharmonic from performing a piece composed by the "Jew" Ernst Bloch; and in his 1970 book *The Malay Dilemma*, he noted "the Jews for example are not merely hook-nosed, but understand money instinctively."

On January 24, 2004, the Minneapolis newspaper, *The Star Tribune*, carried a story about the book tour of Irshad Manji, author of *The Trouble*

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with Islam. Faced with threats for her criticism of Islam's treatment of women and its anti-democratic tendencies, she travels with a bodyguard. Among Muslim spokesmen, Manji was denounced by her fellow Canadian Tarek Fatah, moderate host of a weekly television show in Canada, and a self-professed Islamic reformer. Tarek Fatah claimed: "This book was written by the Jews and for the Jews."

With the largest Muslim community in Europe, France has witnessed more acts of anti-Semitism than anywhere else — acts whose nature and scale have not been seen in Europe since the Holocaust (the destruction of synagogues and schools, the desecration of Jewish cemeteries, spitting on and physically attacking rabbis and even children wearing kippas in school, on public transport, and on the street, ugly graffiti praising the Nazi extermination of Jews or simply "*Mort aux juifs!*" (Death to the Jews!). In none of the reported cases were the perpetrators devout Muslims, and it might be the case, as some have suggested, that these are simply thugs using Islam or the Palestinian cause as an excuse. Many Islamic leaders have condemned such acts, but no one more vehemently than Leila Shahid, PLO representative in France, who scolded those at a pro-Palestinian demonstration who shouted "Death to the Jews!" and asserted nothing could be worse for the Palestinian cause than the destruction of synagogues and prayer books, as well as indiscriminate violence against French Jews.

A focal point of the new anti-Semitism has been the public schools: the very same *écoles républicaines* that were to be primary sites and agencies of integration. The number of incidents has been so great, and the regularity so constant, especially since the Second Intifada and September 11th, that no one can dismiss them any longer as isolated cases (as Jospin did while he was Prime Minister). Students and teachers of Jewish faith are called "dirty Jews" on a daily basis, lessons on the Holocaust are interrupted with anti-Semitic remarks, more and more Jewish students have been forced to attend Jewish day schools, after transferring from one public school to another in order to avoid humiliation. These are amply documented in the press, and especially in a book edited by Emmanuel Brenner.[6] According to press reports, it was this book, more than anything else, that compelled President Chirac to appoint the *Stasi Commission on laïcité*, and to defend public schools from becoming zones of racism and intolerance. One account from Brenner's book, by no means the worst, focuses attention on the behavior of girls, rather than boys, who usually are

6. Emmanuel Brenner, ed., *Les territoires perdus de la République* (Paris: Mille et Une Nuits, 2002).

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identified as the culprits, toward two Jewish girls. This occurred at the Lycée Bergson, in the 19th *arrondissement* of Paris: "In the courtyard, during lunchtime, they were surrounded by a dozen girls who hurled insults to their faces: 'dirty Jews,' 'Jew, you stink,' 'You're a whore and on top of that a Jew,' 'you Jews with your stupid wall.' They laughed at each insult. But the humiliations were not only verbal. The young Jewish girls were pelted in the face with pieces of apple and cheese. Their clothes were soiled. 'Jews don't wash,' yelled one of the students. Their tormentors then pulled their hair several times. They were ordered to kneel down and ask forgiveness for being born Jewish. Some students then meticulously went through their school bags, without stealing anything. The goal of the game: to humiliate. The young Jewish girls were trembling with fear, but did not get on their knees. They were slapped across the face. They were threatened with reprisals if they told. Their ordeal lasted forty minutes."[7]

According to those teachers interviewed by Brenner, often school administrators prefer not to take action, not wanting, "to add fuel to the fire," as frequently they themselves faced belligerence and outright threats from parents of the accused, as well as supporters who accompany them. While most anti-Semitic incidents have occurred in schools near large Maghrebin concentrations, they have taken place even in chic *quartiers* in schools with smaller numbers of Maghrebin students. Thus, in November and December 2003, the press had numerous accounts of the verbal and physical torment a Jewish student endured at the Lycée Montaigne, near the Jardin de Luxembourg. There, too, in the face of complaints made by the student's parents, administrators were slow to act, before the two culprits were finally expelled. *L'Express* magazine of April 10, 2003 reported that during a field trip to the beaches of Normandy, where American soldiers had debarked, elementary school students toured the memorial museum and then proceeded to the military cemetery, where their teacher caught a boy and a girl of Maghrebin origin spitting on the grave of a Jewish soldier while another laughed. The school's principal said he was certain that these students did not comprehend the gravity of their act, but he could offer no explanation.

What precipitated the drafting of a law banning displays of religion in public schools, specifically kippas, large crosses and veils, was the November 15, 2003 fire bombing of a Jewish school in Gagny. President Chirac declared "Whoever attacks a Jew in France must understand they

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

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are attacking the whole of France." High level meetings were held with leaders of the nation's Jewish and Muslim communities, a $7 billion urban-renewal program was launched to address poverty in zones of high immigrant concentration, and a commission on *laicïté* was formed, under the direction of Bernard Stasi, to develop legislative recommendations. The Stasi Commision recommended a ban on conspicuous religious signs, as well as adding Jewish and Muslim holidays (Yom Kippur and Eid al-Kebar) to the school calendar, a provision almost immediately dropped without controversy.

Thus began one of most ludicrous debates in contemporary French history. What was the best adjective, some pondered, to describe prohibited religious signs? Politicians and reporters were seen carrying ponderous dictionaries (*Le Petit Larousse* or *Le Petit Robert*), parsing fine shades of meaning between "visible," "ostensible," and later "*manifestement visible*" and "*visiblement apparent.*" Following the recommendations of the Stasi Commision, Chirac said that a small cross, a star of David, and a *main de Fatma* (the hand of Fatma) might be worn discreetly under collars. As it happened, however, the *main de Fatma* that French officials thought to be a piece of religious jewelry, turned out no closer to Islam than is a rabbit's foot to Christianity. As Sophie Bessis wrote (in a January 15, 2004 *Le Monde* op-ed piece), the *main de Fatma*, or the *khomsa*, is a pre-Islamic good luck charm worn by all the peoples of North Africa, adding that her Jewish grandmother would roll over in her grave if she imagined the *khomsa* she gave her granddaughter as a graduation present were in fact an Islamic ornament. Yet, nothing occasioned more controversy, as well as much-needed comic relief, than Education Minister Luc Ferry's clarification of the ban. "*Ostensible*," he argued, should be understood in the adverbial sense, not limited to religious objects themselves. The intention of the wearer was key, so that a bandana, for example, worn simply as a bandana, would be clearly laïc, whereas a bandana worn as a substitute for a veil would be banned. "Creativity is infinite in this matter," he said. "Mere hairiness" (*simple pilosité*), could become a religious symbol and thus fall within the law, despite the fact that an Islamic beard worn by Tahar might appear identical to a laïc beard worn by Jean-Paul. As for the Sikhs, who never appeared before the Stasi commission, they might wear "invisible turbans" (hair nets, in other words). Growing doubts were expressed by mid-January 2004, even by leaders within ruling UMP-UDF coalition (Sarkozy, Balladur, Bayrou, to name a few), despite a relatively high level

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of popular support, even among Muslim women, registered a month earlier (70% favor of a ban on religious signs in public schools among the general population; 53% among Muslin women, according to an IFOP survey).[8] Nevertheless, the law, or some revised draft, will certainly be passed in February, because even those who expressed doubts claim to have been shocked by pro-veil street demonstrations on January 17th, led by Mohamed Latreche, the relatively obscure head of the Strasbourg-based *Parti des Musulmans de France* (PMF), subsequently investigated for incitement to racial hatred. Latreche regularly denounces Jewish journalists, refers to the Socialist party as the "Zionist party," and has led pro-Palestinian demonstrations where "Death to the Jews!" was chanted. Although those who demonstrated were less than .7% of the Muslim population, Latreche was quickly disavowed by other Muslim leaders, and many of those who marched in favor of the veil had no ideological position of any sort. A hardened position on the need to pass the law quickly was apparent even among members of parliament, who earlier had been wavering. Failing to pass the law now, it was claimed, would appear to be backing down in the face of extremist threats by anti-Semitic, radical Islamists in the street.

Sometimes in politics, things seem other than what they are. The issue of girls wearing veils to school first emerged in the *foulard* controversy of 1989. The issue has never been resolved regarding where the locus of decision-making was to reside and whether or not religious signs violated the laïc neutrality of schools. It could be argued that legislation was called for. But why at this particular moment? Were veils, as such, implicated in acts of anti-Semitism that seemed to trigger the sequence of events that led to the Stasi Commission and the law? No one ever argued this. If not, then how could banning the veil, or other religious signs, eliminate or reduce the behavior in question?

Clearly, more was involved in what emerged largely as an exercise in symbolic politics. Had Islam not represented a challenge to traditional French values concerning the secular, neutral concept of public space, where religion was relegated to a subordinate, private sphere, the veil alone never would have elicited such a response. Peripheral concerns, not directly related to schools, were always discussed. What should be done when female government employees, neutral public servants, wore veils? There had been difficulties in public hospitals, particularly in maternity wards, when veiled women were accompanied by obstinate husbands who

8. AFP, December 15, 2003.

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refused to let their wives be attended by male doctors. Under pressure from the Muslim community, some municipal swimming pools set aside special hours for women only, complete with women life-guards and shades placed over the windows. Even in schools, veiled girls often refused to participate in athletics, attend classes in the physical sciences, or sex education, none of which were directly related to anti-Semitism, but nevertheless challenged the unity and integrity of the public curriculum. And what, after all, did the veil signify? Islamic authorities differed over whether wearing the veil was a religious obligation, a religious prescription, or a custom not anchored in religion. For feminists, including Muslims, the veil was a sign of subordination that violated a fundamental commitment to gender equality. Against the veil stood also a relatively new women's association called "Neither Whores Nor Submissives." Organized in response to gang rapes, aggression and harassment visited upon women in the projects who chose not to wear veils, it argued that girls were pressured into wearing veils. The more veils became the norm, the less choice girls actually had. Those who did not wear veils were looked upon as morally suspect, brought shame to their families, and were ostracized. This *communautarisme*, as the French put it, violates republican unity where in public life no recognition is given to separate categories of citizens, and hence separate categories of citizens have no right to make particularistic claims on the public. In contemporary France, communitarian practices that violate gender equality are especially suspect, and some have argued that just as the practice of female circumcision is prohibited, so should any practice or custom on the part of immigrant groups that subordinate women.

What lies behind the symbolic politics of the French government, as opposed to the Muslim community's distinctive claims for recognition in public space, is drawing a line in the sand and saying "*ça suffit!*," enough is enough: these violations of public space have to stop. In order to live in France, one must obey French law and respect French political practice. As *Le Figaro* put it in recent editorials, it is Islam that must accommodate itself to the Republic, not the Republic to Islam.

Then again, there are baser political motives at play. It is the French state that let the situation get out of hand, through *laxisme* or opportunism. Beyond pious denunciations of anti-Semitism, neither the President, the Prime Minister, nor any member of the cabinet has ever identified the Muslim community as being implicated, even indirectly, in the new anti-Semitism, nor has the Muslim community generated grass roots campaigns to discourage anti-Semitic behavior, especially among school children. In

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attempting to reassure the preoccupied Jewish community at a January 24, 2002 meeting of LIRCA (International League Against Racism and anti-Semitism), Sarkozy told the audience to stay calm, that the struggle against anti-Semitism was not a Jewish affair, but "one for the Republic." He went on the claim that those who perpetrate anti-Semitic acts were simply punks (*voyous*), and would be treated as such, adding that "this has nothing to do with the Muslims."[9] One would imagine, therefore, that these "punks" had issued not from the Muslim community, but were Irish, Italian, or perhaps Swedes. As for President Chirac, there has been speculation that his real motive in placing the anti-veil law at the top of the national agenda was to divert attention from the lack of any coherent project, a dismal record, and justifiably low approval ratings — a diversion precipitated by the coming March regional elections.

No doubt, the happiest man in France now is Le Pen. The veil law controversy certainly worked to his advantage. Had he not warned against immigration? Had he not alerted France to the Islamic threat? Had he not said that the political class was corrupt and incompetent? Le Pen never wavered; he was against veil laws from the very start, and for two simple reasons. First, as he put it, "one more veil, one more vote for the FN." Second, what was needed was not a new law, especially one that would alienate his Catholic fundamentalist supporters, but the competence and will to go beyond phony symbolic politics, to really do something. Is it any wonder, faced with the veil law debacle — on top of everything else — that still more French electors will probably cast their votes for him?

9. In *Le Monde* (December 25, 2003).

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The European New Right: From Nation to Empire and Federalism

Antonio Tonini

Introduction

Throughout the 20th century, the extreme Right has been opposed to European unification and has embraced the nation-state as the only viable model of political and economic organization. It has represented the most extreme nationalist views, maintaining the right of the state to expand territorially and economically at the expense of other states. In the extreme Right view, international politics is a perennial conflict between states, and any type of international alliance is considered to be transitory and dependent on particular historical circumstances. This opposition to international engagements, such as the European Union stems from a political culture that has always upheld national identity above all else. The extreme Right has also supported statist political projects aimed at eliminating decentralized political structures and autonomous communities in order to expand the power of the state.

Within the culturally variegated world of the extreme Right, there have been some minority views that have thought of politics beyond the confines of nationalism and the nation-state, and in doing so have introduced major new cultural innovations. The most important contribution has come from a group labeled the European New Right (ENR), which has sought to distance itself from its original political home with innovative views on politics, political identity, and democracy. This movement has embraced federalism, i.e., a more pluralistic view of political identity and European sovereignty within a highly decentralized political structure. Immediately after WWII, individuals within the extreme Right had

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begun the long- standing critique of nationalism, but these were isolated attempts with little following. The ENR has been the only movement so far that originated from the extreme Right and that has embraced a major revision of the ideas of nationalism, political sovereignty, and identity.

The Extreme Right and Europe

The world of the European extreme Right has always differentiated itself from mainstream political movements, thanks to its extreme nationalism and statism. During the 1930s, the extreme Right authoritarian movements exposed an aggressive brand of nationalism that glorified nation and state building, and an aggressive stance in international relations accompanied by large-scale spending on defense. Their statist view also led to the creation of highly-centralized political systems in which the state bureaucracy exercised firm control over the national economy. As a result of military defeat in WWII, most of the extreme Right movements were politically marginalized. But in some countries the extreme Right was still able to obtain significant electoral support thanks to its opposition to the reconstituted democratic regimes. Thus, the Italian *Movimento Sociale Destra Nazionale* (MSI-DN) had a mass membership organization which polled between 5% and 8.5% of the vote. This party was active in the streets with mass protests and strikes, as well during major electoral campaigns. It was positioned at the right of the moderate Christian Democrats and strongly opposed the latter's policy of limiting national sovereignty at the expense of European federalism.[1] Thus, the MSI-DN strongly opposed the Treaty of Rome on protectionist and corporatist grounds. Its position was similar to that of the Italian Communist Party, which voted against the Treaty because it believed that an open trade system would overwhelm the feeble domestic manufacturing base. Similarly, in the 1970s, the French Front National and the British National Front took similar positions opposing European integration. In France, the Front National and the populist movement which preceded the rise of Jean Marie Le Pen's movement were more Gaullist than De Gaulle himself, calling for cancellation of all of France's continental commitments. The National Front was positioned at the right of the Conservative Party by challenging the Tories over immigration and European economic integration. Their brand of nationalism wanted to provide individuals with a framework for cultural integration in societies that were being undermined from below (i.e., regionalist groups)

1. Marco Tarchi; "Radicalismo di Destra e Neofascismo nell'Europa del Dopoguerra," in Trasgressioni 37 (2003), pp. 103-126.

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and from above (i.e., continental integration, NATO and the UN).

During the 1980s, the extreme Right made major electoral gains in many European countries, especially in France, in Germany with the *Republikaner*, in Belgium with the *Vlaams Bloc* and in Austria with the FPO. Domestically all these extreme Right parties maintained that national identity prevailed over all other identities, such as class, ethnicity, and local particularism. These political forces also shared a similar foreign policy stance that stood for the defense of national sovereignty and against continental integration. Nationalism and opposition to supranational organizations such as the EC, NATO, and the UN, have been consistent features of all extreme Right political platforms. Thus, the Front National, along with the French Communist Party, led the anti-Maastrict Treaty campaign which was almost successful during the 1992 national referendum. A report on Le Pen's electoral success during the 2002 French presidential elections linked the extreme Right's success to its anti-EU policy: "The old bruiser's election is indeed a challenge to the European project; but not quite in the way that the Euro-leaders intend. For the truth is that Mr. Le Pen, like other anti-establishment demagogues around Europe, is a product of the EU system. Supporters of European integration often claim that it discourages extremism. To the extent that it prevents radical parties from either wing from implementing their manifestoes, this is true. But there is a downside. As more powers are transferred to Brussels, voters begin to sense that they are losing control of their futures. Sick of the ideological consensus of their governing parties, despairing of being listened to, they are driven to support politicians opposed to the entire system."[2] Similarly, the rise of the *Vlaams Bloc* and the FPO has also been partly linked to the anti-Europe stance of these parties. In Italy, the National Alliance, which developed out of the MSI-DN, remains very skeptical of EU integration and supports the British governments position, which seeks to limit the progress of European political integration and sees Europe merely as an economic trade area with weak political links.

Very few within the extreme Right challenged these widely shared political views which represent the core beliefs and the *raison d'être* of this political constituency. Thus, after 1945, Oswald Mosley argued that the time for antagonism within Europe was over as it was in ruins and feeling the pressure of the superpowers. He also believed that European nation-states were too weak and small and did not represent a viable political

2. "Le Pen, Product of the EU," in *Telegraph* (April 24, 2002).

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alternative or counterweight to the USSR and the US. Mosley stressed that the nation-state had been made redundant by the Cold War and that it no longer enjoyed autonomous foreign policy and domestic economic planning capabilities. Thus, for Mosley, the sensible nationalist needed to come to terms with reality and embrace a new kind of nationalism predicated on a federation of European states and peoples. For Mosley, a unified continent would allow Europeans to develop autonomous political and economic systems. He was especially interested in the latter, because it would allow Europe to develop a comprehensive corporatist regime based on collaboration among classes and industrial protectionism.[3]

Maurice Bardeche and Adriano Romualdi were other leading intellectuals of the movement that shared the same desire to see Europe as a single political entity. Bardeche viewed the post-1945 history of Europe as a conflict between superpowers in which the European forces had been submerged by the USSR and the US. For Bardeche, the forces that wanted to unite Europe had lost WWII and, as a result, Europe had become an occupied territory subject to the political will of colonial powers that had carved up the continent according to two geographical spheres of influence. Bardeche wanted to see Europe as a protagonist once again, and the only way this could come about was through European unification and the pooling of political sovereignty into a single European nation-state.[4] Likewise, Romualdi viewed European history on similar terms as Bardeche, but stressed the cultural dimension of the conflict between the great superpowers and Europe. Romuladi maintained that WWII had been a conflict between two cultures; a spiritual one represented by the defeated European forces and a materialist one shared by both superpowers. Romualdi maintained that, from the ashes of military defeat, Europe had to find a way to recreate itself by seeking a more autonomous political identity. Like his teacher Julius Evola, Romualdi believed that a small elite of European nationalists, standing out in a world in ruins, should lead the way toward the construction of a political and autonomous European state.[5]

All of these early visions were still based on centralized political models, which sought a centralized European nation-state or a European political community led by a dominant European nation-state (i.e., Germany). They also shared the conviction of Europe's cultural superiority due to its historical legacy and its cultural heritage, and they all sought to replicate

3. Oswald Mosley, *The Alternative* (New York: AMS Press, 1972).
4. Maurice Bardeche, *Che Cosa é il Fascismo?* (Rome: Brossura, 1980).
5. Adriano Romuald, *Una Cultura per l'Europa* (Rome: Settimo Sigillo, 1988).

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the nation-state model at the supranational level of government.

Another vision very popular among nationalists and the extreme Right during the 1960s was Charles de Gaulle's idea of Europe. The general had perceived the inevitability of a political dimension to the construction of Europe, initially conceived only in economic terms. From 1958 onwards, he upheld the view that the construction of Europe would only find its true significance in the creation of close political co-operation between the states of Europe. After explaining his motives to Chancellor Adenauer in 1961 in Rambouillet, he made a concrete move in that direction by setting up the Fouchet Commission, which failed to reach an agreement in April 1962. The project was doomed to failure by Benelux opposition to any co-operation formula not based on the Treaty of Rome model, by its insistence on the immediate inclusion of the UK in the process and, last but not least, by its rejection, shared by others, of a common European defense more or less dissociated from NATO. De Gaulle, who wanted a "European Europe," thought that Europe needed to develop its own military capabilities under French nuclear military leadership. Many extreme Right wingers disliked De Gaulle, but shared his European political objectives.

The future leaders of the ENR shared most of the extreme Right's political views during the 1960s. Thus, Alain de Benoist was involved in the movement which opposed France's retrenchment from its colonial possessions and European integration. In the early 1970s, many of the future leaders of the Italian New Right were active in the MSI-DN and its youth organization. The future leaders of the ENR were all nationalists and supported hard-line right wing political leaders bent on or favorable to strong authoritarian government.

European New Right's Cultural Revisions

But the ENR, which originated in France toward the end of the 1970s, was formed as a movement of cultural modernization that developed within the extreme Right but that also broke away from it. The ENR leaders were mainly intellectuals that shared a desire to challenge the *status quo* and to free themselves of the nostalgic cultural straightjacket of neo-fascism. They were interested in introducing deep cultural changes within European society, and especially in challenging the ideological hegemony of liberalism. To the extent that they allegedly destroy collective identities and the spirit of community,[6] both economic and political liberalism were, and are still

6. Alain De Benoist, *Le Sfide Della Postmodernità* (Bologna: Arianna Editrice, 2003), pp. 63-85.

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considered to be the main political and ideological enemies by the ENR.

Communitarian forms of government and social organization, considered by the ENR to be the most important priorities, are challenged by such things as the economic instability brought about by free markets, globalization, cosmopolitism, consumerism, and mercantilism. The ENR stressed that, in order to challenge liberalism, a deep revision of many extreme Right views was needed. In addition, a major break away from its political home was sought in order to allow the ENR to debate its views with all political and cultural forces, and to build anti-liberal links with the Left. This current of political thought aimed to build new political alliances that transcended the Left-Right cleavage by emphasizing post-materialist concerns, such as the rejection of authoritarian systems and racism, the concern for environmental and quality of life issues, and a pronounced anticapitalist, anticonsumerist, and anti-liberal attitude. It also abandoned any authoritarian tendencies by embracing early on participatory democracy, referndums, and direct initiatives. As Marco Tarchi put it, toward the end of developing its critique of liberalism, the ENR stood early on for "the creation of a neutral political Europe that extends from the Urals to the Atlantic based on the rejection of the market economy and capitalism."[7] The ENR believed that, thanks to its history and cultural legacy, Europe could represent a counterweight to liberalism and capitalism, and build economic relations with the Third World. To this end, some sort of European integration was needed to provide a comprehensive European response to American cultural and economic hegemony. As Benoist argues, "As a European of French nationality, I am one of those federalists Le Pen denounces, who believes that it is possible to create a federal political unity in Europe on the basis of peoples and regions."[8]

ENR's distanced itself from the extreme Right beginning with the development of study groups, the publication of journals, magazines and books, and by giving interviews to daily papers. All these attempts were part of a wider, more global strategy, which sought long-term political developments through cultural change as opposed to direct political action. Since the late 1970s, ENR leaders were interviewed in daily papers and magazines. Thus, Pierre J. Proudhon was appreciated by the ENR, because of his opposition to modern capitalist society and large

7. Marco Tarchi, "Radicalismo di Destra e Neofascismo nell'Europa del Dopoguerra," in *Trasgressioni* 37 (2003), p. 120.

8. "Three Interviews with Alain De Benoist," in *Telos* 98-99 (Winter1993-Spring 1994), p. 179.

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nation-states, and for his support for a federal political system based on self-sustaining, small political and economic units of government.[9] Alexis de Tocqueville was embraced by Benoist because of his negative views of centralized political systems based on the Jacobin model, and his appreciation for intermediate groups and political communities based on decentralized models of economic and political government that prevailed in colonial America.[10] Both authors were definitively loathed by the French extreme Right, and opposed by its cultural tradition based on Charles Maurras, Giovanni Gentile, and others that had a favorable view of strong authoritarian political systems.

One of the core ENR principles is the right to difference and "the emphasis on philosophical pluralism: opposition to the reduction of life to any one variable or force (e.g., the class struggle, economy, nation or race)."[11] The principle of the right to difference is opposed by the ENR to modern liberal individualism, which seeks to remold society in terms of one single political and economic model based on bourgeois democracy and capitalism. In this view, the nation-state is criticized, because its historical role has been to standardize society by eliminating local customs and beliefs. Benoist has argued that "according to Bodin, sovereignty is above all inseparable from the idea of a political society; it abolishes particular connections and loyalties and sets itself up on the ruins of concrete communities. Implicitly, the social bond has already turned into a governmental contract, in which only individuals are involved, eliminating any mediation between members of society and the power of government. This severing of the connections between prepolitical communities and the political unit will be brought about, first, by absolute monarchy, and then by the nation-state, which defines itself above all by its homogeneous character, whether that homogeneity is natural (that is, cultural or ethnic) or acquired (by relegating all collective differences to the sphere of private life)."[12]

Central to the ENR's abandonment of nationalist positions are the works of Louis Dumont, and Johannes Althusius. Dumont has written major works that oppose modern society based on individualism to ancient societies based on caste systems and community. Dumont argues that "in

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9. Alain de Benoist, *Visto da Destra* (Napoli: Akropolis, 1981), pp. 367-369.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 347-350.
11. Mark Wegierski, *The European New Right*, in *Telos* 98-99 (Winter1993-Spring 1994), pp. 61.
12. Alain de Benoist, "The Modern Conception of Sovereignty: A Jacobin Invention," in *Chronicles* (July 2003).

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the most precise, modern sense of the term, nation and nationalism (distinguished from simple patriotism) have historically been part and parcel of individualism as a value. The nation is just a type of global society which corresponds to the reign of individualism as a value. Not only does the nation accompany individualism historically, the interdependence between them is so indispensable that one could say that the nation is a global society composed of people who consider themselves individuals."[13] Benoist used Dumont's work to criticize modern society based on mutually exclusive nation-states with capitalist economies and bourgeois values. Althusius is embraced by the ENR because of his concentric view of political identity. For Althusius, citizens have multiple non-mutually exclusive political identities, which lead to the creation of federalist political structures based on several layers of government. Althusius' view of sovereignty differs from statist perspectives, which believe that state power should be maximized at the expense of regional autonomy. For Althusius, sovereignty should be exercized by consociational means and by pacts among different social and political interests that represent the body politic. In addition, he argues that there should be a multiplicity of governmental bodies within the polity each having the right to exercise sovereignty.[14]

The ENR and Europe

The ENR's process of cultural modernization and definite abandonment of nationalist positions culminated in 1991 at the organization's annual conference.[15] At this event, the ENR made a major break from its historical home when it attacked the nation-state by proposing European political federalism based on the political institutions of empire. First, the ENR noted that new international and domestic developments, such as the waning of the Cold War, economic globalization, the unprecedented changes occurring in Eastern Europe, and the growth of populist and federalist forces, as well as continued pressures against central state authority by ethnic based movements, were all indicative of a major challenge that is currently being waged against the nation-state. According to the ENR, the nation-state is being challenged, because it is no longer seen as a viable model of political organization. On the one hand, the state is being

13. Loius Dumont, *Essais sur Individualisme* (Paris: Sueil, 1983), pp. 20-21.

14. Alain de Benoist, *L'Impero Interiore* (Florence: Ponte Alle Grazie, 1995), pp.138-139.

15. GRECE 24th National Congress devoted to the topic "Nation and Empire," held in Paris (March 24 1991). See also *Diorama Letterario* 171 (1993) special issue on Europe.

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challenged from below by forces which demand greater economic and political autonomy. On the other, the nation-state is challenged from above by multinational corporations and supranational political institutions. In light of these developments, the ENR argued that the nation-state had become an obsolete model of political organization and, therefore, there was a need to look at politics and political institutions that offered an alternative to the nation-state.

Second, the ENR distanced itself even further from the extreme Right when many of its contributions at the annual conference stressed the role that other political forces had played concerning European integration. Thus, the Christian Democrats were hailed for their massive contribution to political and economic integration, as well as for their political culture, which had generated important political concepts, such as the principle of subsidiarity. According to the ENR, the French MRP, the Italian Christian Democratic Party, and the German Christian Democratic Union have tolerated many domestic compromises, but have always remained strongly in favor of European unity. The role of the Greens was also put forth as an example of how an integrated movement is able to introduce issues of common concern to all Europeans. The contribution of European federalists from a socialist and radical tradition, such as Arturo Spinelli, was also recognized as an early attempt in the development of alternative political institutions to unitary states.

Third, the ENR turned to the empire as an alternative model of political authority to the nation-state, because the former can incorporate different peoples and cultures while the latter has historically produced cultural standardization. Thus, the empire is embraced by the ENR, because it represents an alternative way of organizing political life. Benoist argued that: "In order to create itself, Europe requires a unity of political decisionmaking. But this European political unity cannot be built on the national Jacobin model if it does not want to see the richness and diversity of all European components disappear."[16] Benoist also argued that the ENR's ultimate political goal should be to support the creation of a Europe of a hundred flags composed by numerous national communities, regions, and free cities. The only model that can sustain a fragmented and culturally diverse polity is the decentralized political structure of the empire. The major difference between the empire and the nation-state is the way in which they achieve political unity. For the nation-state, political unity is achieved by mechanical means and by

16. Alain de Benoist, "The Idea of Empire," in *Telos* 98-99 (Winter1993-Spring 1994), pp. 97.

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standardizing its people into one culture and language. For the empire, political unity is achieved through organic means, thanks to a political structure that goes beyond the state's territorial confines.

As Maurice Duverger argues, the empire is a multinational entity. It includes a multiplicity of peoples and cultures that retain their distinct identity.[17] As a multinational entity, the empire cannot afford to standardize into one culture. The economic and political costs would be too high. Thus, the rulers of the empire have to select political institutions that are federalist in nature and allow widespread political, economic and cultural decentralization. In empires, administrative and military centralization is limited to common purposes and never undermines the autonomy that exists within domestic structures. An ENR historian, Franco Cardini, has recently written a book on Charlemagne, stressing how the Carolingian emperor was able to keep together a diverse empire with policies and institutions that respected both the principles of unity and diversity. Charlemagne united Europe and based his empire on Christianity and the Latin language, but he also allowed the various European languages and cultures to flourish and coexist alongside the administrators of the empire and the Catholic Church. He also created highly decentralized political institutions that were based on a multiplicity of local governments called "the comitatus," which exercised power in the realms of military recruitment, law enforcement, and tax collection. For Cardini, Charlemagne and his empire are historically relevant to the current process of European political integration.[18] His political model is outdated, but his historical legacy can be of help to Europeans as they decide on their future institutional setting.

Furthermore, there are common elements in the Roman and the Carolingian empires that might appeal to today's integrationists, such as the creation of a common legal code, a common currency, and the building of roads. The current ENR view of European integration is in some ways similar to those who see the Swiss confederation as the best political model for Europe, because it is based on a highly decentralized political structure and a semi-sovereign central political authority. Switzerland and its institutions can provide guidance to the European Union as well as demonstrate to both skeptics and enthusiasts that in the path toward unity, the cultural and social diversity of Europe can be protected.[19]

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17. Maurice Duverge, *Le Concept d'Empire* (Paris: PUF, 1980), pp. 10-11.
18. Franco Cardini, *Carlo Magno* (Bologna: Bompiani, 1998).
19. Jean Blondel, "Il Modello Svizzero: Un Futuro per l'Europa?" in *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2 (1998), pp.203-27.

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In addition, the Swiss confederation's use of direct democracy to decide major political issues can also show European policy-makers the way to increase voters' participation in the policymaking function, as well as increase their attachment to the polity. In a politically integrated Europe, participatory democracy is seen by the ENR and by many political scientists as a useful tool to create a European political identity among its citizens.[20] Others share the ENR's desire to see Europe become one. The idea is also cherished among historians in France and Germany. Thus, Hagen Schulze hopes that the "ancient states and nations" of Europe "may gradually fade away and recede into the background to make way for one united Europe."[21]

Conclusion

This vision of Europe is rather different from that of the extreme Right, predicated on the nation-state as the primary political actor. It also differs from current European Union institutions and its process of administrative and bureaucratic building. It also differs radically from the British and the French governments' ideas of Europe. The British want to create a weak political supranational structure and a large free trade area that incorporates Eastern Europe. The French government seeks to build a political Europe predicated on the predominant role of the French and German nation-states, which should act as the motors of Europe. The ENR advocates European integration, but stresses the subordination of economic to political integration and the need for the development of a European conscience. Also, the ENR believes that the power of the nation-state should be subordinated or merged into supranational federalist institutions. For Benoist, Europe is currently facing a major choice that will define its future for many years to come. Should Europe prioritize economic liberalization and become a large region where the free market economy predominates, or should it opt for a political alternative based on European integration grounded on federalism and subsidiarity to ultimately be able to act as a counterweight in international relations? The ENR definitively opts for a federalist and ultimately political Europe,

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20. Yannis Papadopolous, "Democrazia e Referendum," in *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, Vol. XXV, No. 2 (1995), pp. 197-226. See also Phillippe C. Schmitter; "What is there to Legitimize the European Union. . . and How Might This Be Accomplished," in *Istituto Universitario Europeo*, Florence, Italy (January 2001), pp. 1-18.

21. Hagen Schulze, *States, Nations and Nationalism: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), pp. 376.

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which will place economic issues on the back burner and address those of identity and center-periphery relations. This position is also shared by many founders of Europe, which, according to *The Economist*, also "hope that one day the EU will be a great power — a peaceable, liberal, law-based and generous great power, no doubt, but one capable of looking the United States or China in the eye."[22]

The ENR continues to strive to retain a critical and distant position *vis á vis* European integrationists and Euroskepticks. In a Europe that is more divided than ever after its members came to blows over their proposed first constitution in December 2003, and where the cracks are as painful as they were when the EU split over the question of war in Iraq, the ENR offers a breath of fresh air. But, at the same time, the ENR, even after the major revisions it has undertaken, has still failed to create solid alliances that cross political boundaries. Thus, the European Left has rejected outright the idea of empire or of politics beyond the nation-state. On the one hand, the moderate social democratic Left appears to support the current project of European economic integration, without any great enthusiasm for political integration and for policies that undermine domestic welfare states, such as a decentralized European polity; on the other, the more radical Left is still too attached to anti-capitalist and anti-liberal models of the statist variety to be interested in a European project. Moreover, this Left refuses to embrace federalism and self-government. As far as other political forces are concerned, the Christian Democrats appear to be in decline across Europe, and their thrust in support of European integration has lost steam. They have also failed to produce a constitutional blueprint different from that of French policymakers or concerned with innovative institutional ideas based on federalist principles. Other forces that might be interested in the ENR's ideas concerning federalism and self-government, such as the Greens or the Northern League in Italy, also appear to be declining in electoral strength. The failure to develop broader alliances has contributed to the persistent isolation of ENR ideas across Europe. This shortcoming has undermined the group's ability to gain greater recognition for its unique ideas, such as the concept of empire.

22. "The History of an Idea" in *The Economist* (December 31, 2003).

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Notes and Commentary:

On the French Right — New and Old: An Interview with Alain de Benoist[1]

Frank Adler

Adler: We should begin discussing the present state of the Right in France, because the initial project of the New Right was to renew this community, to counter the hegemony of the Left. Talking about that hegemony is difficult since the Left is in a deep crisis. What we find in France now is a united Center-Right party in power; a Left leaderless, divided, and not knowing where to turn; and a Right with no clear ideas, principles, or strategies. Mégret was a fiasco. Le Pen remains in a permanent *ghetto*. What do you make of the present situation?

Benoist: I think the situation has completely changed in the space of thirty years. When, in May 1968, the New Right emerged, that is, what later came to be called the *New Right*, things were relatively simple: no one claimed openly to be part of the Right, indeed, the term was hardly used anymore. There was a Left hegemony, quite evident within university circles and, generally speaking, among intellectuals. The objective was to reconstitute ideas and concepts, developed through an encyclopedic process, to create a structured discourse in every domain of thought and knowledge. I can't say that this oobjective has yet been achieved. Thirty years later, this work continues. It has given life to a great number of articles, reviews, books, symposia, meetings and conferences. Obviously, it was not a fly-by-night phenomenon. It lasted a long while — a rare occurrence in France.

What happened? First, the world has changed. From the 1970s on, Left hegemony slowly disappeared and was replaced by a quiet hegemony of former leftist intellectuals more or less tied to the dominant political and economic system — intellectuals who abandoned Marxism or radical ideas in favor of a sort of liberalism or social democratic centralism. Yet, they remained very intolerant, and extended their influence beyond universities to journals, publishing houses, and the

1. This interview took place in Paris, Jan. 11, 2003. Trans. by Marie-Hélène Adler.

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media in general. From this viewpoint, the situation today is rather paradoxical. Compared to the 1970s, there has been a clear decline in Left hegemony. At the same time, there has been a growing intolerance. The result is an ideology that no longer has much to say, but wants to prevent the articulation of all non-conformist thought. This was best exemplified by the so-called "Appel à la vigilance."[2] Today any real intellectual discussions in France have simply disappeared.

Second, the two main intellectual camps have splintered and crumbled. This means that the notions of Right and Left no longer adequately describe the present ideological groups or families of thought. Moreover, this tendency was accelerated by the impact of many political and historical events that provoked cross-sectional reactions within the dominant political families. I am thinking particularly of the European Union and the outbreak of major conflicts such as the Gulf War, the Kosovo War, and the War in Iraq. Each time such events occur, the Right splinters and falls apart, and so does the Left. Take the European question. There are people on the Right who are completely pro-EU, as well as some who remain completely hostile to the idea. On the Left, one finds the same thing. Thus, each time this occurs, the traditional ideological families break up and certain Left-Right and Right-Left affinities resurface. Another typical example was the phenomenon, very specific to France, of *souverainisme*. This refers to those who are profoundly attached to the idea of national independence, whose mouthpiece for a while was Jean-Pierre Chevènement. Actually, those who rallied around him came both from the Right and the Left. Paul-Marie Coûteaux, who has sympathies for both Le Pen and Chevènement, is just one exponent of this orientation.

Ideologically speaking, this split is even more evident, because we have witnessed the crisis of what Francois Lyotard called the "grand narratives." The overarching institutional ideologies — Marxism, Structuralism, Freudianism — have more or less disappeared. Today, French intellectual life, which is not particularly brilliant, has organized itself around writers such as Alain Finkelkraut, Régis Debray, Pierre-André Taguieff, Jean-Claude Michéa, Alain Caillé, and Michel Maffesoli. At times, they have interesting thoughts, but they cannot be appreciated in terms of Right or Left. This impasse has been the object of many debates: What is Right? What is Left? The concepts of Right and Left were born with modernity, at the time of the French Revolution. But modernity today is ending, and we are entering the so-called postmodern era with all the ambiguities attached to the term. Ideological divides are no longer those described by the traditional Right or Left. There will be new ones. Feuding camps will always face off, but now they will be determined by a completely changed world. I already gave the example of the European Union or of the Gulf War, but there are also all the problems related to technology, for example biotechnologies, which provoke either positive or hostile feelings in completely different milieus (the debate on cloning and such topics).

2. See "The Appeal to Vigilance in France," in *Telos* 98-99 (Winter-Spring 1994), pp. 135-208.

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Third and finally, the Right always had limits, which were rather difficult to establish. Where do they end toward the center and toward the Far Right? As a man of the Right, I feel that a psychological typology might make more sense than a purely political or ideological one. That would suggest that the distinction between a man of the Right and a man of the Left still retains some validity, but only when considered from a psychological viewpoint. In real life, however, as opposed to analytic constructs, there are several types of men of the Right and the Left, and also mixed temperaments. Thus, I am probably the prototype of someone who came from the Right, but whose temperament is fundamentally that of the Left. Actually, what became clear to me was the degree to which the contemporary Right is almost totally uninterested in ideas. In that sense, the project of thirty years ago, to delelop ideas so that people might have some intellectual ammunition, was one that could not have succeeded, simply because ideas cannot be given to people who do not want them. The man of the Right is not a man of ideas. There are few intellectuals on the Right. There are writers on the Right, there is literature there are historians on the Right, but the intellectual as a cultural figure who is trying to understand, to explain, to theorize, that is something rather foreign to the Right. The Right is essentially reactive, not reflexive. It determines itself, either positively by enthusiasm, or negatively by indignation. The man of the Right sees something happening, and he immediately reacts, saying: "it is fantastic or horrible, something has to be done!" That is the Right's reactive side. Of course, the Left has reactions too, but againsts the Right. Furthermore, the Right does not have ideas so much as it has convictions, which are existential substitutions for a faith that one defends and never questions. In fact, that is the reverse of the intellectual process. In an intellectual process, one always questions ones' ideas, because thought is never static, it is always a work in progress.

Adler: The Left too has its traditions and scared cows that are often held beyond serious reflection and criticism.

Benoist: Yes, but throughout its history the intellectual Left has always recognized the importance of reflection and theoretical development. One idea leads to another. People wonder if they did not make a mistake holding a position perhaps incompatible with some of their other positions. People debate issues. On the Right, there are no debates. When quarrels erupt there, they are always between men who detest so and so, who disagree. Never in Right journals does one find debates similar to those often found in Left journals. This distinction is even more striking if one compares extremes: the Extreme Left and the Extreme Right. I have read many communist and Troyskyist journals in which ideological discussions go on and on with an overabundance of quotes and bibliographic references. With the Extreme Right, it is just the reverse: there is never a discussion! Something is simply asserted on the basis of fixed values, such as courage, honor, and order — values based more on fixed moral convictions than on political observation and reflection.

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Adler: Maybe there is another difference linked to that. Historically, on the Left, there had always been the commitment to realize an objective *telos*, for example, Socialism. But today, if you ask people on the Right what goal they are pursuing, no one would say fascism or Nazism.

Benoist: Yes, that is true, even though it is unfair to imagine that a rightist *telos* could have no form other than fascism or Nazism. Actually, very few people on the Right are able to say clearly what kind of society and institutions they would like. The models they think about are only reminiscences of an idealized past. When I say that the Right is reactive, I also mean that the Right is always or almost always trying to preserve something that is in the process of disappearing. Characteristic of the Right is bitterness, sneering, derision, regret, nostalgia — all reactions showing that the Right's ideal is always foregone, always spent: great examples from the past, great men of the past; it was so much better before, it was so beautiful, etc.

This goes toward what you said earlier, that the Left had at least a *telos*. Today, the difficult situation of the Left stems from disillusionment with a *telos* that did not work. The country of "real socialism" did not produce much enthusiasm. Models crumbled one after the other, and the idea of progress is in crisis (that is, people have lost the conviction that the future automatically will be better). Consequently, the Left now is comprised by two groups: On the one hand, a small minority that more or less retains its revolutionary inspiration, and attempts to legitimate it by the ongoing reality of problems such as exclusion, unemployment, racism, especially with reference to a growing number of those victimized people that Marcuse called *les sinistrés du progrès* (people left behind by the "triumphal" increase of commercial exchanges, by technological changes, by the needs of a society based more and more on cognitive abilities). For that part of the Left and Extreme Left, this is proof that, ultimately, there will still be a revolution. However, it is only a vague hope, with no clear perspectives about what will have to change. More than a real revolutionary will, it is a moral protest. On the other hand, there are the immense majority of the big Left battalions, formerly communists, Maoists, Troskists, etc., who no longer believe in revolution, who think we live in the only society possible, that, of course, we can always reform and improve, but that there are no fundamental alternatives to the way of life we have. Like Fukuyama, these people believe that we have come to the end of history. Henceforth, re-centering Right and Left, a mixing of the Center Right and the Center Left, a marriage of social liberalism and of liberal socialism (in the European sense). This has led to a perverse political consequence in that it justifies identical centrist politics from the Left and the Right which do not meet people's needs or expectations. There is thus a chain reaction: the re-centering of the parties leads the electorate to see that all politicians say the same thing, that no one is more successful than the other, that no one is more honest than the other. Because of that, either it does not vote any more, and the rate of abstention increases, or else they vote for purely protest parties of the Right or the Left, for Le Pen or the

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Trotskyist Arlette Laguiller — for candidates they know cannot gain power, for candidates who do not really want to win. With this protest vote it wants to teach mainstream politicians a lesson. Thus, there is now a divide between "the people below," as we say now, and a bureaucratic-managerial "new" political class. There is thus a growing identity between the political and the ideological field, because the evolution of the ideological field has favored this relativization of the notions of Right and Left, and the re-centering one sees in the political scene.

Adler: Yes, but it is interesting to note the ideological weapons one still uses against the other. For the Left, it is always vigilance against fascism; for the Right, it is vigilance against communism

Benoist: There is not perfect symmetry. The Right, as it is reactive, and, as you said, having no *telos*, defines itself very often only as the "contrary" of the people against whom it fights. The Right draws its very existence from the existence of its enemies. For a century, the formidable adversary was communism. Consequently, for the Right, the classic sin of the Left was that it was leading to communism or it allied itself with communism. When Mitterand was elected, many people believed that the Red Army could soon come to Paris, that houses were going to be raided, even people who were not idiots believed that. Then communism disappeared, the Soviet system collapsed. It is interesting to observe that, unlike fascism, communism almost immediately became historicized and relegated to the past. Anyway, after that, the anti-communist argument, did not work any more. The Extreme Right needed to replace its enemy, and the easiest way was to make foreign workers a target. As luck would have it, immigrants came after the communists were gone. They succeeded them with this further aggravating element: immigrants were attacked not because of their ideas, like the communists, but because of their very nature, because of their existence, and in a manner which nourishes racism and xenophobia, etc., because what is reproached, regarding immigrants, is the fact that they are *here*. Very quickly, the criticism of immigration became extended to a criticism of Islam, just because many immigrants are Moslems. This was also triggered, of course, by the development of a world wave of radical Islamism, of islamic terrorism, produced by the eclipse of secular Arab nationalist forces in the Middle East and by the American policy toward the Palestinian problem. Huntington's thesis about a so-called "clash of civilizations" was what dealt the final blow. For Catholics, this thesis was also reminiscent of past Islamic-Christian conflicts. Of course, this is only a very general sketch. But it explains how, in France, most of the radical Right quickly linked immigration and an image of Islam confused with Islamic terrorism. Islamism was assimilated with Islam, Islam with immigrants, and immigrants with Islamism, so that the ordinary Arab grocer is presumed to be an Al Qaeda terrorist.

Moreover, we also have entered into a world of threatening, unfamiliar networks, described by Ulrich Beck as one where a new notion of risk has become dominant. Beck argues convincingly that risk, in the contemporary sense, is

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something very different than "danger," classically understood. Risk is omnipresent, contrary to danger, which is limited and localized. Today, there are networks, there are risks, and risks of all types: Aids, new epidemic diseases, pollution, oil tankers on the coast, bombs, Islamists. Everywhere, people imagine themselves to be surrounded by others who look normal but might be terrorists, carriers of a contagious disease, and so on. It is easy to see how this culture of risk becomes a culture of fear, and how this culture of fear then becomes a culture of fantasy. If one adds to that legitimate anxieties caused by an objective increase in insecurity and unemployment, it becomes clear how the problem of immigration gives rise to a multitude of fantasies, beyond whatever real problems might be posed by immigrants. These immigrants are systematically thought to be unemployed, drug traffickers, Islamists, revolutionaries, who want to transform France into a mosque . . . everything falls into place. So much for the Right!

For the Left, it is a bit different. It is clear (or it should be) that in 2003 anti-fascism is totally anachronistic and obsolete. The time of fascism and communism is over. The curious persistence of this residual anti-fascism can be accounted for with a macro- and a micro-explanation. The macro-explanation deals with the differential treatment afforded to fascism-Nazism and communism. They have never been treated in the same way. One needs only to look at television and cinema to see that films are constantly produced to "keep alive the memory" of one, while the other has more or less already been quietly forgotten. There is still no equivalent of *Schindler's List* to describe the world of the Gulag. Sixty years after its disappearance, fascism remains a threatening historical myth, kept alive for all kinds of reasons, and thus politically instrumentalizable. Anti-communism can no longer be instrumentalizable against the Left, but anti-fascism can still be instrumentalized against the Right, in particular to prevent the Right from allying itself with the Extreme-Right, as has happened with Haider or Le Pen. The micro-explanation is that most people who signed the *Appel à la vigilance* are former communists or former members of the Extreme-Left, who repudiated almost everything, who betrayed everything, who abandoned all of their ideas, either opportunistically, or more honestly by the evolution of their ideas. However, they are annoyed at having done this, so they keep something that has not changed at all: an anti-fascism, as virulent today as it was when they were Maoists and Troskyites, and actually even more virulent, since that is the only thing that allows them to say that they have remained faithful to the ideals of their youth.

Adler: Morin actually said something like that: The weaker the Left, the more virulent is their denunciation, for that is the only remaining weapon.

Benoist: Of course. One ends up in a surrealist predicament where there is a compulsion to denounce a fascism that does not exist, to accuse people who are not fascist, since the only ones who could objectively be described as fascist are found in groups unable to change the political landscape, even if they can occasionally perform some violent acts. Stressing constantly an imaginary "past danger" is also

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a good way to be blind about real dangers or to mask today's real problems.

Adler: What sense can one make of the sudden and rather remarkable popularity of Nicolas Sarkozy, Minister of the Interior, or "Speedy Sarkozy" as he has been dubbed in the French press? Though he has been attacked by the Left for his aggressive stance against crime, in fact he put in place some of the same policies that had been advocated by Chevènement and Vaillant, his predecessors in Jospin's government.

Benoist: Now, that is another problem. First, Sarkozy knows that crime is real, that people have had enough of the rise of delinquency and such. He also knows, because he is a cynical politician, that many people on the Right vote for Le Pen for that particular reason. Thus, he wants to look like Speedy Sarkozy, who unleashes his supermen night and day, here seizing a presumed terrorist, there having someone else arrested. He knows that this will delight the Right. On the other hand, on the Left there has been a definite evolution. For a long time the Left upheld a classical humanism that expressed itself this way: crime is but a fantasy, there is only a feeling of a crime wave that is used to justify repression. Today, a lot of people on the Left realize that this is not true, because they see their electors, their working class electors, voting for Le Pen for that very reason. Moreover, if one considers real numbers, problems such as delinquency in schools have been getting worse. Many people of the Left are beginning to say that, indeed, more order is needed in schools. As they have abandoned the libertarian ideas of May 68, some feel order really needs to be restored. Thus, Sarkozy is more accepted today. Except for a tiny minority, his actions do not provoke the great indignation one would have witnessed thirty years ago.

Another factor is the objective participation of the immigrant population, those with an immigrant background, in criminal activities. In France, around 60% of the prison population is of foreign origin, which is enormous, somewhat comparable to the US, where the majority of prison inmates is African-American. This state of affairs fuels all kinds of interpretations and some fantasies. In France however, we have also a very sizeable Jewish community, which fifteen years ago campaigned for the defense of immigrants with organizations like SOS Racisme. This community now realizes that, partly as a consequence of the Israel-Palestine conflict, a judeophobic attitude is growing in immigrant milieus, in the *banlieues* (poor suburbs where many Immigrants live). Maybe one could compare what happened in the US, between the time when the Jewish-American community supported the Civil Rights Movement and the emergence of a phenomenon like Farakan. The only difference is that in France we are not dealing with African-Americans, but with Arabs. In the US there is some tension between Jews and blacks, often Black Muslims, Farakan's followers, etc. In France we have Muslims identifying with the Palestinians, so that many members of the Jewish community slid more and more toward the Right to the extent, in some cases, of voting for Le Pen.

Adler: Like Jo Goldenberg, owner of the famous Marais delicatessen, who

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before the first round of the presidential election said he intended to vote for Le Pen.

Benoist: There is a symmetrical evolution. As anti-Jewish feelings develop among French Muslims, so do anti-Arab feelings within the Jewish community. These feelings are much stronger with the Sephardic Jews, who today constitute most of the French Jewish community and come from the French Northern African territories. Often, these Jews fled Algeria when they were ten or fifteen years old, chased by the War of Independence, in a climate of extreme violence. Their arrival after 1962, precipitated a significant transformation of the French Jewish community, which had been mainly of Ashkenazi origin and much more inclined toward the Left than it is today. One should not forget that many Algerian Jews were in the OAS, and today they must be thinking that the conflict is still going on. This colonial or Algerian background explains a lot, because the feelings of many are expressed in an extreme, but very revealing manner: "We did not have a French Algeria then, but we are going to have an Algerian France now," or "They kicked us out, and now they are invading us." This background is very important.

Adler: That judeophobia so widely reported in the press seems to me more a pathological reaction by young Arabs to uprootedness, alienation, and social exclusion than reflective of a deeply held and historically transmitted anti-Semitism. The older generation, in fact, cohabited with Jews very well, often in the same neighborhoods, just as they did earlier in North Africa.

Benoist: That is right. It is young people who are the most responsive to the radical Islam. However, this judeophobia, although real, should not be exaggerated, as is commonly the case in American papers. In France also, some people magnify it today, either in the Jewish community, because we always magnify the wrongs we are subjected to, or by other observers, usually knowledgeable, but who on this point are mistaken (and here I am thinking of Pierre-André Taguieff, who has begun to do what he formerly denounced in others), that is, identify this incontestable judeophobia, popular with young immigrants of the *banlieues*, with anti-Zionism or criticisms of Israel. You cannot put in the same bag *banlieue* youths writing hostile inscriptions on a synagogue and people such as Gisèle Halimi, Edgar Morin, Daniel Sallenave, who are certainly pro-Palestinian or anti-Zionist, but not at all judeophobic. This is important, because in the US there are so many articles that give the impression that in France we are living in a quasi-Third Reich. This judeophobia, fortunately, has been responsible for only a few things (incidents, insults, one or two synagogues were torched), but that turned out to be an unrelated accident).

Adler: Not in Marseille.

Benoist: True, not in Marseille. There were some incidents and doubtless there will be others, but this is not a situation of pogroms, of racial laws, or concentration camps. Fortunately, no one has been killed yet.

Adler: Yes, and one might also note the difference between two mass demonstrations in Paris. At the pro-Palestinian demonstration, none of France's major

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politicians could be spotted. Only a few celebrities from the Extreme Left were there, while at a demonstration in support of French Jews . . .

Benoist: All major political parties were there. That is a great difference. If there is a clear, localized judeophobia in some circles, that is nothing common to the Islamophobia that is expressed by some readers of Huntington's theories or, above all, Oriana Fallaci's incredibly racist book. If one had substituted the word "Jew" for the word "Arab," Fallaci's book would have been forbidden. There was a lawsuit, but the book was not censored. One has to keep a sense of proportion in these matters. Now, to return to the Right, what is striking about the issue of immigration is its relative support for the themes of exclusion and xenophobia, themes too often substituted for a reasonable critique of immigration. That is why I disagreed with the National Front (FN) from the very outset. Campaigning only against immigration implies an ongoing simplification. For most of Le Pen's followers, things are very simple: there is an enemy, the Arabs, what are perjoratively called the *Bougnouls*, and they have to be kicked out. How this might be possible in Europe today, of course, is a question nobody cares about. For the great majority of the extreme Right, xenophobia is a quick substitute for any kind of serious reflection. It is striking that the FN, which was and objectively remains a relatively important movement (Le Pen obtained up to 15% of the votes, roughly four million electors), only enjoys the support of a totally mediocre press, writing at the lowest cultural and intellectual level. This is the first time in French history that an Extreme Right movement produces nothing at the cultural level. There was not a single book of ideas, not one famed intellectual associated with the movement. This is quite revealing, both of the degeneration of the Right and the Extreme Right. It is in marked contrast with the period between the two world wars, for example, when it was still possible to find on the Right or on the Extreme Right many great literary and intellectual talents. Today, you have a flat encephalogram. The electoral amplitude of the Le Pen phenomenon cannot mask the extraordinary political and intellectual impoverishment of that family. I personally expect nothing from it.

Adler: Perhaps Mégret's initiative was its last chance for a renewal.

Benoist: But his movement was typical of the Right. Look at the facts. There was a big party, the FN, and in it there were the usual ongoing quarrels between individuals, never ideological debates. Mégret was number two who wanted to be number one. Thus, all those who resented Le Pen bet on Mégret. They forgot one important thing, Le Pen might well have had some defects, but he had electors. Mégret had supporters among local leaders, but not electors. And electors who vote for the FN were not ready, of course, to vote for a second-hand copy of the same thging. In addition, Mégret did not possess the means, the temperament, the charisma, or the presence to touch the voters. Le Pen is a political animal, a true politician. When he speaks, many recognize themselves in him. When Mégret speaks, everyone laughs. His drawbacks are his unattractiveness, his technocratic

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profile, and his unsympathetic personality. You cannot say that he looks like a nice guy, and certainly not like a man in whom most lower-class voters could recognize themselves. Moreover he adopted an absurd, contradictory strategy: he wanted both to be more extremist than the FN in the fight against immigration, so much so that he accused Le Pen of being an Islamophile, and, at the same time, sufficiently moderate to be accepted by the Chiraquian majority as a viable partner. These goals were totally irreconcilable. He also wanted to accomplish this with people who individually were often more extremist than Le Pen. The result was that everybody was disappointed. The Mégretistes first received 3% of the vote, then 2%, then 1%, then 0%. When Mégret initially broke from Le Pen, I wrote in my book, *Dernière année,* that they were disappointed Le Pen supporters, who would soon become disappointed Mégret supporters. It was at the time of the Congress of Marignane. In fact, it happened much faster than I imagined.

Adler: I happened to be at Marignane as an observer. This meeting was extraordinary. It took place in a large hall, actually a gymnasium, with people everywhere, full of enthusiasm. It was a bizarre mix of older, very pleasant, moderate, provincial people, and young extremists. Though within the FN the Mégretistes were called "New Rightists" by Len Pen's entourage, the Congress actually began with a greeting by the old militant and notorious anti-Semite François Brigneau, hardly someone close to the New Right by age or temperament.

Benoist: That can be explained. Brigneau had been a life-long friend of Le Pen, and including him in the program was a conspicuous wink at FN supporters: "if Brigneau, Le Pen's old comrade, is joining us, then you must join us too." The error of Mégret was to forget that a political party prospers not only when it has militants and leaders, but above all when it has voters. Mégret simply does not appeal to voters: he is a cabinet man, a high civil servant. He may be a good organizer, a good number two. But a good number two will not necessarily be a good number one. Take another example, that of a singer and impresario. The impresario thinks: Why can I not be the one singing? The impresario kills the singer in order to sing himself, but that does not work. Even if the impresario is very good at his job, he does not necessarily know how to sing.

Adler: In retrospect, it is ironic that within the FN the Mégretistes had a reputation for exceptional organizational skill and political competence. This is precisely why in the mid-1980s Le Pen recruited the so-called new rightists, just as the FN was making the transition from a *groupescule* to a political party of national significance, with organization and expertise. Yet, when they broke from the FN and formed the MNR, the Mégretistes proved to be both organizationally incompetent and lacking any political savvy.

Benoist: Therein lies the great problem. It is very common for people of the Right to want to engage in politics. But they do not know how, because they lack any idea as to what politics really is. Julien Freund coined the word "impolitical" to describe the kind of politics undertaken by people who do not understand what

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politics really is, its essence, its goal, its limitations. I think the Right is fundamentally *impolitical*, either because it believes that good politics is more or less a return to the past, a restoration, or because it believes that politics, above all, is a matter of ethics, a kind of "sacrificial" action, a field where "moral virtues" have to be illustrated, an eternal "struggle," etc. But politics is only a patient search for the best ways to achieve the common good. That is why most voters seek concrete responses to their problems, which unfortunately they do not obtain very often.

When Mégret split with the FN, some newspapers wrote that this had been organized by the New Right. This, of course, was completely wrong. In fact, all the alleged connections between the New Right and the FN or MNR imagined by the press were pure fantasies. Mégret was never part of the New Right. Yvan Blot and Jean-Yves Le Gallou were members of the New Right thirty years ago. They left it twenty-five years ago, not to enter the Extreme Right, but rather the very respectable and classical parties of Jacques Chirac (the RPR) and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (the UDF). It was only after this, and years later, that they jumped from the RPR and the UDF to the FN. As for myself, I never voted for the FN. The only one that came from the New Right was Pierre Vial, who these last few years has broken with Le Pen, then with Mégret. When leaving Mégret's movement, Vial accused Mégret of being a stalking horse for Chirac. Things are probably simpler than that. At the time of Mégret's split with Le Pen, Chirac's party might have encouraged Mégret because he was considered to be potentially useful in weaklening the FN. Afterwards, Chirac's supporters certainly would have had no scruples against allying themselves with Mégret had he miraculously obtained 15 or 20% of the vote. But, since Mégret received only 1 or 0,5% of the vote, he no longer counted.

Adler: What you said about Vial is interesting. At the famous December 5, 1998, meeting of the FN's *conseil national*, when a fight broke out between Mégret's supporters and Le Pen's (someone actually recorded the meeting secretly, and I obrtained a copy of the cassette), Le Pen directly attacked Vial, saying "Organize a congress of GRECE, you might have a majority there . . ."

Benoist: Yes, they smeared each other. Le Pen sees conspiracies everywhere, and it is possible that he might have thought Vial was acting against him because he was pushed by the New Right. But that was not the case. In the years that followed, as I said, Vial left Mégret's movement and, strangely enough, as a regional counselor he endorsed the nomination of Le Pen for the 2002 presidential elections, when it was said that Le Pen might not have enough signatures to be a candidate (as you know, in France one must obtain 500 signatures from city mayors, members of Parliament, regional counselors, etc. to qualify as a candidate for a presidential race). That was some kind of retaliation against Mégret, who disappointed him. But Vial did not return to the FN. On the whole, his reaction was mainly emotional. Once again, you see here how the people of the Right are "reactive." They love somebody, or they do not love him anymore; this is always more important than analysis and reflection. Given Vial's behavior

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toward Le Pen, the most amusing thing is that, around 1978 or 1979, Le Pen signed up to attend a colloquium of GRECE. I decided to turn him down, the person who actually kicked him out when he appeared was none other than Vial. This might appear as a portrait of someone who is not very rigorous, but Vial has always been sincere. He is also a courageous man, motivated mainly by enthusiasm, by sacrificial militancy. He probably thinks the best way or dying would be of a cardiac arrest while putting up posters in the streets. . . .

Adler: Or, better yet, in the forest, given his weird (if not actually racist) distinction between wholesome "men of the forest" and devious "men of the desert."

Benoist: Maybe. But young people love him, because this exemplary side is a great inspiration for people of the Right. Vial's qualities are real. But politics is something else.

Adler: Mégret is clearly finished, and within the FN there is now an open conflict for eventual succession between Marine Le Pen and Bruno Gollnisch, and behind Gollnisch ...

Benoist: This is complicated. Problems of succession are always very dangerous for the Right, precisely for the reasons I gave earlier. Everything is so personalized, so linked to emotions, that when a leader disappears, all hell breaks loose. The leader's subordinates o immediately begin to compete and fight among themselves. You notice that in the history of fascism, and it is an important difference with communism. When the Secretary-General of a communist party disappears, there are mechanisms that assure succession.

Adler: With fascism, classically understood, defeat in war precluded any succession. The Italian and German defeats made succession a moot point.

Benoist: Yes, it was the war, but generally, when there is no war, succession never goes well, except maybe with Franco. You must remember that Le Pen has a big flaw, which explains his quarrel with Mégret: Le Pen does not like to be contradicted. He does not like to surround himself with very bright people. He does not like anyone to outshadow him and in the history of his party, and has always eliminated people who could compete with him. This is the main cause of his quarrel with Mégret, who took advantage of his position to acquire more and more influence. Had Mégret quietly waited for Le Pen's death, he would have succeeded him without great difficulty. Thus, there are not many valuable people today among FN leaders. That is the first point. As far as the dauphins go, Gollnisch is intelligent, educated, but does not have much charisma. He is rather lazy, a very poor organizer; he is not so bad on TV, but the French would say there is a flakey side to him. I do not see masses of electors voting for him. But Marine Le Pen has two advantages. First, she is a woman, and she has on certain points a woman's reflexes. Thus, she confronted Bernard Anthony on the question of abortion, because she knows what abortion represents for most women. She is not at all a militant Catholic, and religion is not her dominant concern. Moreover, she does not have the old-timers' nostalgic past, of Vichy or Algeria. She is a young woman of

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our time. The second advantage, of course, is her name, Le Pen. Familial legitimacy counts, especially on the Right. This is why Mégret at one time instrumentalized Le Pen's other daughter, and enlisted her mainly to use Le Pen's name.

Adler: Marie-Caroline.

Benoist: Yes. So, my prediction is that should Le Pen disappear tomorrow, and the choice is between Marine Le Pen or Gollnisch, Marine would probably win. And in that case, there could be a new split. At any rate, it is unlikely that Marine Le Pen would have sufficient strength and ability to maintain the FN current electoral level, let alone make it grow. Everything depends on the people surrounding her about whom I know practically nothing. From what I read or hear, they seem to be "modern," coming from her generation.

Adler: In fact, her organization is called "Generation Le Pen."

Benoist: Yes, the Generation Le Pen. That is to say, young people without exaggerated nostalgia, who realize that it is a handicap for the FN to drag around old members of the OAS, Vichy, etc. That does not concern them anymore. It is a generational phenomenon.

Adler: They are not very Catholic, as are many of the FN's older generation.

Benoist: They are not very Catholic for the good reason that today in France no one is very Catholic any longer, except for a very active small minority. You must not forget that all the polls showed that Catholics as a group did not vote for the FN, except for some integralists or traditionalists, and that most of the people adhering to the FN were more secular than the average French person.

Adler: Why then the relative weight, the strength of Bernard Anthony in all this?

Benoist: Because Anthony is a network man. Like many traditional Catholics, he has organized many networks. He has excellent relations in circles generally very nostalgic for the OAS, Algeria, the militant struggle against communism, against the "red danger." For his part, Le Pen is not a man of ideas or ideologies; he clearly conceived the FN, from the very start, as an ecumenical site where almost anyone was welcome who agreed politically. If in other respects one was an atheist, Protestant, Catholic, etc., that was never his problem. Anthony, on the contrary, has tried to expand his network, but he is caricatural and has even less charisma than Mégret. He has his small group, his small court, but appears as ridiculous as Mégret. Antony has a good relation with the right-wing integralist newspaper *Présent*, which is becoming more and more pro-American, even over Iraq. George Bush has been idolized in the columns of *Présent*.

Adler: Because of his stance against Muslims, that is all.

Benoist: That is one of the reasons.

Adler: But *Présent* had always been anti-American.

Benoist: No, its dislike of Americans has always been moderate. Under Clinton, who was from the Left, that was something else. But as soon as Bush came to power, it was pure ecstasy. President Bush was described as "our President," "*George W., we love you.*" And on the first page of the newspaper! Why? Because

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for these naive people Bush represents banning abortions, "*In God we trust*," the return of the Christian Right, Ronald Reagan reincarnate, whose "boys" will fight in the spirit of John Wayne, etc. The main "Bushophile" in *Présent* is Alain Sanders, who is a fan of John Wayne, country music, Disneyland, etc. This is all rather amusing, because *Présent* generally supports FN positions, despite the fact that the FN has always cultivated some friendships in Arab countries — Iraq in particular.

Adler: Last time, I forgot, what was the position of *Présent* in the Gulf War? Was it not against the war?

Benoist: It was hostile to the war, but favorable to the French army. A typical reaction of the Right: "even if we disagree with the motive of the war, we have to support our troops." But this was before the shock of 9/11, before the new wave of "Islamic terrorism," and, above all, before Bush's election. This was also before the split between Mégret and Le Pen, and the links were then stronger between *Présent* and the FN. When the quarrel between Mégret and Le Pen started, *Présent* did not support Le Pen. It was rather critical, and stood as an outsider.

Adler: Yes, it was impartial.

Benoist: *Présent* made it clearly known that Le Pen had made some mistakes, and said that it would publish communications by both groups. Le Pen did not like that at all, and one of the main editors of *Présent*, who was very Catholic, Yves Daoudal, left to become the editor-in-chief of *National Hebdo* (the FN official house-organ), replacing Michel Pelletier, who was considered to be a Mégretist and more or less connected with the Mégret camp. Well, since then relations between *Présent* and Le Pen have somewhat recovered, helped by Mégret's collapse. However, this relation is not as close as before. Both are maintaining some distance. For mot of the Extreme Right, Bush is now on the good side, on the side of the "West."

Adler: But not in the FN.

Benoist: No, not in the FN leadership. But I am certain that at its base many members support the war for reasons I have just elaborated.

Adler: Explain to me this anti-American evolution of Le Pen. Because in the beginning, he tried to become the French Reagan, he saluted John Wayne, etc.

Benoist: Le Pen did not start out being anti-American. As a member of the traditional Right, he was used to reasoning from the perspective of "the West" more than that of Europe. This was inherited from the time of the Cold War, when the "free world" was supposed to constitute a united bloc against the Soviet Union. Moreover, when the FN began to succeed, it was the time of Reagan and Thatcher. Thus, Le Pen, a true politician, that is to say an opportunist, said: I am the French Reagan! That evidently did not work. Afterwards, he became more anti-American both through his dealings in the Arab World with the intermediary of Martinez, the one from Morocco, and because he understood that his electorate was strongly attached to the idea of national independence. Thus, he began to be against the EU and against the US at the same time. Another reason is that nowadays Le Pen sees, like everybody else, that globalization, interpreted as a New

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World Order, is organized under American direction, in conformity with American interests, etc. In such a situation, Le Pen sounds the discordant voice, befitting his place in the French political landscape.

Adler: One could say there was also the influence of Le Gallou and Bardet. *Identité*, the FN's cultural journal, was edited by Bardet, who adopted a rather anti-American stance.

Benoist: This could have played a role. Bardet, even more than Le Gallou, probably retained from his former time in the New Right some elements of a radical critique of "American ideology" (Manifest Destiny, etc.). But do not forget that Le Pen only adopts an idea or a position if he thinks it will pay politically. He is not anti-American for ideological, intellectual, or philosophical reasons. He simply thinks that defending an anti-American position in the Gulf War is more profitable than a pro-American one.

Adler: But why this pro-Iraqi position? One could certainly be anti-American, but not support such a horrible regime. It is bizarre, because in France Le Pen is against Arabs, against Islam, or Islamism in France.

Benoist: No. Le Pen is not against Islam. On this point, he is paradoxically more "moderate" than most people who vote for him. He has always cautiously centered his discourse against immigration. He has never uttered a word against Islam. He always maintained that his argument was nationality, not race or religion.

Adler: He does oppose the building of mosques in Marseilles, for example.

Benoist: Against the mosques, well, yes, because in his mind that would lead to the destruction of the French landscape, would be a visible symbol of the "invasion." But I think this was more a concession to his audience. One should not forget the important role of someone like Farid Smahi. Especially during these last few years, Le Pen made some declarations reflecting rather moderate positions on Islam, and that is precisely why Mégret accused him of Islamophilia. Mégret's anti-Islamism has been much stronger than Le Pen's. Thus, the Huntington thesis on the shock of civilizations is always reoccurring in Mégret or Le Gallou, but not so often in Le Pen's. Le Pen always said that we should have good relations with Arab countries, who are our normal partners and who do not support immigration at all, which is true. This is something that the French political class always seems to forget. Le Pen, who was able to meet with the King of Morocco, was told by him to kick the Immigrants out, because Morocco would very much like them to return. Le Pen always said you need good relations with the Arab countries, for it is with them that we will solve the problem of immigration. This is a far more intelligent position than to say we should wage war against a billion Moslems in the world. I also have the feeling, but it is only a feeling, that Le Pen no longer believes it is actually possible to send immigrants back to their countries of origin who, some for more than two generations, already have French nationality, since they have married French people, whose children have only known French schools, etc. Such a belief might have been possible twenty years ago. It is much more difficult to hold it today.

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Adler: But Iraq is not a typical Arab regime. It is far worse. For someone like Le Pen to actually support Iraq is tantamount to supporting political gangsterism.

Benoist: No one disputed that the Iraqi regime was a dictatorship. The question is to know if any country in the world, the US, for instance, has the right to decide which regimes have to be destroyed without the backing of international institutions, to invent the "danger" of imaginary "arms of massive destruction," to engage in military operations against a whole people, to occupy its country for an undetermined time, to take the risk of replacing the dictatorship with such utter chaos that things end up worse in the whole region. In addition, when the country under attack is also an oil-producer of major geopolitical importance, this "virtuous" position becomes suspect, especially when it comes from a superpower which has supported so many dictators in the past and continues today to maintain excellent relations with the Tunisian, Algerian or Egyptian dictatorships, among others. Anyway, I can imagine that there is a parallel Le Pen noticed between his position and that of Saddam. Le Pen is kept on the side by the "Band of Four," that is, by the four main political parties. He is atypical, he is the intruder, the "black sheep" — and on the international scene, the same goes for Saddam. He is an obstacle to world order. So, Le Pen decided to support him, or at least to denounce any agression against his country. This also allowed Le Pen to present himself as a skillful player: On the one hand, he is against immigration, on the other he supports Iraq, which shows that he is not a maniacal anti-Arab, etc. This position is more intelligent than Mégret's, who thinks we are threatened by a billion Moslems, so this means war against one sixth of the world's population.

Adler: That certainly was Le Gallou's hardline position, and Mégret was wrong to let it stand as his as well.

Benoist: Yes, most of the MNR communications were written by Le Gallou, and I dislike their general tone. You know that I have never had any sympathy for Le Pen or Mégret, but when they broke with each other I found Le Pen's communications more correct, more balanced than Mégret's, which struck me as extraordinarily stupid. That is rather strange, as everybody once said Mégret was dangerous, because he was extremely intelligent. We were told for months by the French press that, after all, Le Pen is nothing but a clown, that the real danger is the "clever" Mégret. The real danger in the end amounted to zero and such stupid writing! There is in all of this an extraordinary amount of fantasy.

Adler: This is also funny, because in the first round of the presidential elections Le Pen ran the type of "proper," relatively inoffensive campaign the Mégretistes had been advocating all the time they were in the FN. I recall that at that time Mégret emphasized this point, that for years he pushed and pushed for the type of public behavior that the press later called "Le Pen Light," but it was only after the split that he seemed to have become more rational. So, what we saw was a strange inversion: the extreme Le Pen became moderate, and the moderate Mégret became extreme

Benoist: Like everyone else, Le Pen is also growing old. He is past the age of

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uttering apocalyptic proclamations. In any case, Le Pen has succeeded in what he wanted to do. One really has to be incredibly dumb to believe, as many do, that Le Pen ever wanted to hold power. That would have been the worst thing that could have ever happened to him! This is the reason why I always thought that the Left was wrong in doing everything it could to prevent an alliance between the Right and the Extreme Right. I always defended the opposite position. If, in 1981, Le Pen had been given a small ministerial position like that of Undersecretary of State, it would have been all over. No more FN. Look at what happened in England with Thatcher. She did that. Look at what happened in Austria with Haider. It amounted to nothing. Le Pen wanted to be talked about. He succeeded. He was a political star for 20 years. He organized a party that grew stronger as criticism against him increased. He is rich and famous. He is a thorn in everybody's side. That was his supreme objective. That is all he really wanted, it is typical Right-wing attitude.

Adler: And no responsibility.

Benoist: Precisely. Is it not wonderful? Le Pen succeeded in what he wanted to accomplish. You might say he is a man who has been very lucky in life. Some people are lucky. Mégret is not.

Adler: In fact, Mégret told me that as well; destiny, he said, seemed to be against him.

Benoist: Le Pen was also lucky financially, since he inheritated a great deal of money from one of his supporters. Le Pen was born to a poor family, and he remained poor for a long time. But when he inherited wealth, he became a bourgeois, a "*nouveau riche*." He was delighted to enter upper class circles. He creates a little party that was nothing for many years and then, suddenly, by the "miracle of Dreux" (the first FN electoral success), it takes off, and then it grows, and the more he is criticized the higher he goes. He jump-starts the machine with one or two provocative utterances, and immediately people rush into the snare: It is abominable, it is Hitler once more, etc., and up the polls go again.

Adler: My impression is that for many in the FN, gaining power and, in effect, ruling has always been less important than having a sense of belonging, especially on the part of those who could not possibly feel at home in other political parties.

Benoist: Of course, belonging is always important. That is one of the stronger human motivations. But concerning the seizure of power, there are different levels of appreciation or motivation. Le Pen's chief motivation, to be a nuisance, to become a political star, has been accomplished. The motivation of the FN executives was not so much power, but rather to re-energize a political family that had previously disappeared. But for the voters, surely many of them have seriously thought that Le Pen one day could seize power. They vote for him for this very reason, which, after all, is quite normal. They were encouraged in this rather naive belief by the stupidities often said and published by the Left and the Extreme Left, which so instrumentalized the purported FN "danger" that they made Le Pen's seizure of power a believable hypothesis.

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Between the two rounds of the last presidential election, after Le Pen emerged second to Chirac in the first round, this attitude became hysterical. I saw catastrophic scenarios in the newspapers, showing mathematically that Le Pen could be in power ten days later. On TV, it was possible to hear extravagant declarations from people announcing: "If Le Pen wins, I am packing and leaving the country," "concentration camps could be opened up in France in a fortnight," "I have already reserved my flight, I am leaving France." A fantastic collective delirium prevailed. The result was that the Left voted massively for Chirac, who the very same Left had denounced as a crook a fortnight earlier. Chirac probably would have lost the election if he had to face Lionel Jospin in the second round. In the end, Le Pen allowed Chirac to be elected, though Chirac was his chief political enemy. In such an electrical climate, Le Pen voters came to believe that their champion could win in the second round. They were, of course, bitterly disappointed by the results. Everybody went mad at that time, because it had become perfectly obvious that Le Pen, with 16% of the votes in the first round, had absolutely no chance no win. After the election, the Extreme Right reacted emotionally, as always. The final result added to Mégret's failure, and pushed many to say that it was all over, all was lost, that was the end, that was the last hope. The old moderates went home, while for the young people it was further proof that with the existing political parties nothing will ever be possible, that only violence could bring results. In that sense, it is clear that the results of the last presidential election might very well radicalize young people who were formerly obliged to remain more "quiet." In such a climate, all forms of provocation are possible. The appearance of a new extremist pole on the Right would then nourish extremism from the other side, with all the risks related to that

Adler: Are you thinking, for example, of Maxime Brunerie, the MNR hardliner who tried to assassinate Chirac at the July14 parade in Paris?

Benoist: Yes. of course. Brunerie was not of any importance, but tomorrow you could as well have a "super Maxime Brunerie," or a small group could decide to organize some "counter-terrorism" in the hope of setting off an "ethnic war." Stupidities of this kind are always possible in a general climate of political crisis, of extremism and hysteria in social relations and intellectual life. The FN at least had the advantage of channeling a number of extremists, preventing them from committing crazy acts which would have compromised the party, whereas now young people like the skinheads and others are roaming free.

To sum up, what always struck me is the number of people who took Le Pen seriously, either as partisans or adversaries. I never believed for a minute that Le Pen was a danger, that he could actually gain power. Besides, I am convinced that the first thing he would have done if he had held power would have been to adopt the most moderate policy possible in order to demonstrate the extent to which he was unlike what people said he was. For twenty years, the "Le Pen phenomenon" has been a permanent, incredible psychodrama. Finally, if Le Pen has been a danger, it was rather a danger for the Right. To many people on the Right, he gave hope that ended

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only in deception. He triggered the belief that it was possible, using the immigration problem, to gain power through elections. Implicitly, he also legitimated the neglect of any cultural initiatives, the neglect of any intellectual reflection. He seduced many young people, who were attracted to him as one can especially be in youth, and left them with the bitter feeling of having lost their best years for nothing. The FN appeared to have revived a family of thought, when in reality it totally buried it. However, the "Le Pen phenomenon" served to reveal the deep crisis which has afflicted contemporary French society, with all its social and political contradictions. But here we hit upon another problem regarding the significance of so-called populism, a political form which often poses fine questions, but often gives bad answers.

Adler: In any case, in France, and not only in France, in America, in Italy, and everywhere, it seems as if politics as we knew it is disappearing. The old form of a political party with militants who march, put up posters, attend meetings, volunteer their time, etc., is finished. It has been replaced with virtual, mediatic, parties.

Benoist: Yes, that is obvious. I have written about this transformation numerous times. The end of modernity for Western countries means the end of several political phenomena: the end of the nation-state model, the end of the "Leninist" model of a party conceived as a church, that is to say, the end of the commitment of the militants as sacerdotal. I remember hearing in my youth: One must enter politics like one enters religion, like a monk pronouncing his vows, a total commitment, day and night and even in one's dreams, that is a militant's life. It is evident that now this happens only at the two extremes, and in very tiny circles. Parties have no members any more, nor do unions and churches. All of these phenomena go together. We are confronted with a general crisis of those political models and institutions inherited from modernity. The main division is no longer between Left and Right, but between "above" and "below," between a new managerial and political class, which tries to continue deciding everything for everybody at the very moment when nation-states are more and more impotent, have less and less room to operate in the face of global economic, financial, technological realities, and the common people who see that none of their concrete problem can really be solved by this new class. Nowadays, common people no longer make revolutions. They just leave. They discover that real life is elsewhere, for example in building associations or communities around common aims and shared values. As for the "classical" political system, what remains is more and more used by people as if they were consumers in a market. The sociological, traditional or religious affiliations of yesteryear are gone. This explains these transfers of votes that astonish political scientists like Nonna Mayer. People try things out. They engage in political "zapping," remote control, exactly as they do when watching television, jumping from one program to the next. When they want to buy a car, they say: last time I bought a Chevrolet, now I am buying a Toyota. At the polls, they do the same: last time I voted for Mitterrand, now I will try Le Pen, tomorrow maybe Chirac or Laguiller. And when they are tired of this game, they do not vote any more. For them, real life is elsewhere.

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Schmitt in France[1]

Alain de Benoist

In the fall of 2002, one of Carl Schmitt's most famous books, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, was published in France.[2] At first, like so many others, it was met with indifference until *Le Monde*, in lieu of a review, published a lead article by Yves Charles Zarka titled "Carl Schmitt, Nazi Philosopher?"[3] Obviously, the question mark is a matter of form, and Zarka does not say much about the book, but he does comment that Hobbes' thought is "distorted" by a "stupid" interpretation of "an anti-Semitic reading of Western political history." The main brunt of the article is to claim that Schmitt is a "Nazi philosopher." This is a ridiculous characterization for two reasons: first, Schmitt was not a Nazi theoretician; second, Schmitt was not a philosopher, but a jurist.[4]

Zarka asks: "Can this work be published in a philosophy collection as if it were a philosophy book?" His answer is no, and his explanation is staggering: "Schmitt texts should be studied the way one studies other Nazi texts, i.e., as documents, not as publications and even less as philosophical publications." Put more bluntly, Schmitt's works do not exist. The books he wrote are not philosophical, and thus should not be published. But if they are published, they should be treated as "documents," probably like Alfred Rosenberg's writings or Adolf Hitler's speeches. In other words, Schmitt should be treated the same way that the Nazis portrayed "degenerate art," i.e., to show how horrible it is.

On the same page, Barbara Cassin, the editor of *L'ordre philosophique*, was asked to justify why she published Schmitt's book in a philosophy series. She immediately obliged by answering that she wanted to pose the serious question: "How can someone be a Nazi *and* a philosopher at the same time?" This just shows how ignorant she is about the subject, particularly when she identifies Schmitt as the

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1. Translated by Kathy Ackerman.
2. *Le Léviathan dans la doctrine de l'Etat de Thomas Hobbes. Sens et échec d'un symbole politique* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), with a preface by Etienne Balibar, who is on the far Left, and an epilogue by Wolfgang Palaver, a disciple of René Girard. In English, it has appeared as *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol*, tr. by George Schwab and Erna Hilfstein (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996).
3. See December 2, 2002 issue, p. VIII of the *Literary Supplement*.
4. In *Ex Captivitate Salus: Erfahrungen der Zeit 1945/47* (Cologne: Greven Verlag, 1950), as well as in *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt clearly states: "I am a jurist, not a theologian." He goes so far as to say that law is worth much more than morality.

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author of a book titled *Die Nationalsozialistische Gesetzgebung*. However, she does not go as far as to pretend that she read it — and for good reasons. The book does not exist. Apparently, she confused it with a 1936 article mentioned by Zarka.[5] The kindest explanation is that she made a mistake copying the notes she was given.[6]

Topping all this, the reader of *Le Monde* is treated to a little article by Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine, who appears not to have forgotten that one of her main targets, Mircea Eliade, was associated with Schmitt.[7] In her book about Corian, Eliade, and Ionesco, she presumes to attack one of Schmitt's books: *Die Romantische Politik*.[8] Unfortunately, this book does not exist either. The book Schmitt wrote was titled *Politische Romantik*,[9] but who cares about details? Next, she asks a stupid question, revealing her fantasy: "Is it inevitable for our intellectual life to visit Germany?" (*Ach, fatalitas!*) Then, this scatterbrain writes: "It seems so long ago, in 1987, when Alain de Benoist, leader of the New Right, thought he would provoke public opinion by devoting an issue of *Nouvelle Ecole* to the theoretician of the 'total state.' Interest in this work led to many translations in the 1980s and found passionate readers on the Left and the Right." Even if one overlooks how stupid it is to imagine that a special issue on Schmitt is published in order to "provoke public opinion," there is cause for concern. On the Right as well as the Left, more and more people read Schmitt. Alexandra is discovering that they are lukewarm. A few days later, on December 20, 2002, *Le Monde* published an interview with Jürgen Habermas, where he says that he is also distressed by the way Schmitt has been received "from the 1930's until today." The interview was recorded by Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine![10]

Apparently, the name Carl Schmitt can provoke hallucinations in a fair number of French intellectuals. Blandine Kriegel, who is never far behind Alexandra

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5. The precise reference, which Zarka does not provide, is: "Die nationalsozialistische Gesetzgebung und der Vorbehalt des 'ordre public' im internationalen Privatrecht," in *Zeitschrift der Akademie für Deutsches Recht*, Vol. III (1936), No. 4, pp. 204-211.

6. The coeditor of *L'ordre philosophique* is Alain Badiou, who did not express himself on the subject. He is a former Maoist, and belongs to the group of "new reactionaries" criticized by Daniel Lindenberg, who blames him for trying to "demonstrate the inconsistency of Human Rights." See *Le rappel à l'ordre. Enquête sur les nouveaux réactionnaires* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), p. 33.

7. See Cristiano Grottanelli, "Mircea Eliade, Carl Schmitt, Rene Guenon, 1942" in *Revue de l'histoire des religions* (July-September 2002), pp. 325-356.

8. *Cioran, Eliade, Ionesco ou l'oubli du fascisme. Trois intellectuels roumains dans la tourmente du siècle* (Paris: PUF, 2002), p. 95. Concerning Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine's political and sentimental career, see Jean-Claude Maurin, "Will they ban Eliade and Corian?" in *Eléments* (July 2003), pp. 40-47.

9. See *Politische Romantik* (Munich-Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1919); *Romantisme politique* (Paris: Librairie Valois, 1928); and *Political Romanticism*, tr. by Guy Oakes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986).

10. Habermas came to Paris on December 5 to speak at a seminar organized by Zarka. One of the other speakers was Rainer Rochlitz, who coordinated a book in the collection *Débats philsophiques*, ed. by Yves Charles Zarka, *Habermas: l'usage public de la raison* (Paris: PUF, 2002).

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Laignel-Lavastine,[11] is unquestionably among the main victims. The fact that she obviously does not know anything about Schmitt's work does not seem to matter. She never misses an opportunity to excommunicate him. In 1996, she described Schmitt as the "founder of the doctrine of the totalitarian state."[12] Three years later, she notes, unafraid of ridicule, "a trend in German political romanticism, which recently culminated with the great jurist Carl Schmitt."[13] This idiot does not know that Schmitt always opposed political romanticism. On November 30, 2002, at a session organized by UNESCO, she denounced Schmitt's influence on the "former Marxists Antonio Negri, Etienne Balibar, and Giorgio Agamben."[14] A few days later, in *Libération*, she again attacked "the completion of political romanticism due to Carl Schmitt," and was in a panic "about the power of irradiation [*sic*] that the former leader of Nazi jurists has over theoreticians inspired by Marxism."[15] Around the same time, she published a book of platitudes, typical of her work. She calls Schmitt, Heidegger, and Ernst Kantorowiz "obscure stars of German culture, i.e., whose brightness obscures republican thought." Then, she claims that Schmitt joined the Nazi Party because of his "anti-democratic" convictions, and contradicts herself by also claiming that "Nazi thought was great thought, and was as democratic as it was revolutionary."[16] Furthermore, she assures her readers that for Schmitt politics is only an "aspect of war,"[17] although Schmitt states exactly the opposite. Her intellectual level is painfully low.

André Glucksmann, who is just as ignorant, writes with a straight face that nowadays the supporters of a multipolar world, i.e., a world not completely subjected to American power, "seem to follow Carl Schmitt's lead, even if they are not aware of it [*sic*]." Supposedly Schmitt wanted to give "a so-called 'totalitarian' or 'decisionist' power to the state," and defining "the essence of 'sovereignty' as 'the privilege to establish or to suspend laws and to settle issues without rules, written or not'."[18] So many words, so many stupidities (starting with the idea that one could follow someone's lead without knowing it).

Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt tells of a "French intellectual scandal," i.e.,

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11. Both appear in a book by Dominique Schnapper, *La nation* (Paris: PUF, 1997), published in the collection "Philosophie politique," ed. by Zarka. It also contains a text by Rhida Chennoufi titled "The Concept of Nation in Carl Schmitt." About Blandine Kriegel, see Jean-Claude Maurin, "Blandine et Alexandra," in *Eléments* (April 2003), pp. 33-34.
12. Blandine Kriegel, "La philosophie républicaine," in *Libération* (Oct. 24, 1996).
13. Blandine Kriegel, "Le principe de légitimité" in *L'avenir du droit. Mélanges en hommage à François Terre* (Paris: PUF, 1999), p. 50.
14. A short article in *Le Monde* (Dec. 3, 2002) mentions this warning. Nicolas Weill, Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine's partner in life, signed it.
15. Blandine Friegel, "Pour la République démocratique" in *Libération* (Dec. 4, 2002), p. 7.
16. Blandine Kriegel, *Etat de droit ou Emprie?* (Paris: Bayard, 2002), pp. 115-116.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
18. André Glucksmann, "L'étrange renversement d'alliance," in *Le Monde* (Apr. 4, 2003).

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that "French thought has been invaded by official Nazism, represented in this instance by Martin Heidegger, Carl Schmitt, and Werner Sombart. They were very much in favor in the Parisian salons, and the way they used the German language and style demonstrates immediately that they belong intellectually and intimately to Nazism," whose essence "cannot be translated into a language so inappropriate as to express basic brutality." Probably for good measure, one learns in passing that since the beginning of the 19th century "French philosophy" has "literally been invaded or at least contaminated by a monstrous verbal outgrowth of the German language"![19] But that is already psychiatric literature.

In a similar style, the enlightened Jean-Baptiste Marongiu, was not afraid to credit Schmitt with the "fundamentalist desire for an order in which civil society and the state would become one unique, inseparable 'entity'." He then adds that, at the end of Schmitt's life, everybody thought that "he had become a Maoist," and that his "fantastic fear of women" could well be the "touchtone" for his decisionism.[20] There are other examples, ranging from Jean-François Kahn, who calls Schmitt a "pre-fascist German economist,"[21] to François Souty, who calls him a "neo-Nazi pamphleteer,"[22] and Christian Delacampagne, who despises Schmitt because he is not an "extremely original thinker."[23] And the ineluctable Daniel Lindenberg denounces the "new reactionaries," and solemnly explains that it "really is 'the Carl Schmitt software' that has allowed this evolution."[24]

Robert Redecker, the contributor to Claude Lanzmann's *Temps modernes*, immediately joined Zarka's attack launched by *Le Monde*. Taking it a little further, he did not hesitate to portray Schmitt as Rosenberg's "rival" who, after "adopting political racism," presented "the history of thought as if driven by a war on race." For Redecker, Schmitt is a theoretician for whom "ideas only express interests related to race" — in short, a man responsible for the "philosophical foundation of totalitarianism in general and Nazism in particular."[25] One might say that asking Redecker about Schmitt is like reading the complete works of Goebbels in order to learn about the Jews.

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19. Georges Arthur Goldschmidt, in *Le Monde* (Jan. 6, 2001), p. 15.

20. Jean-Baptiste Morangiu, "Carl Schmitt dans tous ses états," in *Libération* (March 15, 2001), p. viii.

21. Jean-François Kahn, in *Marianne* (Nov. 11, 2002), p. 66.

22. François Souty in *La Quinzaine littéraire* (July 15, 1996), p. 27. Here he also attacks Christopher Lasch, whom he portrays as the embodiment of an "ultraconservative sociopolitical and philosophical trend" seeking to "return to the mythical sources of America, using a vocabulary close to Roger Garaudy's in France." Accused of "hiding behind an impersonal style," Lasch's positions leads "to dangers to come." The author, of course, adds: "Lasch's writing has to be decoded."

23. Christian Delacampagne, "L'ennemi des droits de l'homme," in *Le Monde* (Jan. 26, 2001).

24. Interview with Daniel Lindenberg, in *Les épées* (April 2003), p. 18.

25. Robert Redecker, "Schmitt ou le fantasme de la politique pure," in *Marianne* (January 6, 2003), pp. 66-69.

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Zarka's article in *Le Monde* was his most recent and visible attack against Schmitt. Two years earlier, he made Schmitt the target in *Cités*, a journal he publishes.[26] He asked: "How can we explain the sudden interest in the Nazi ideologist Carl Schmitt in several European countries, an interest that, after Italy, is now affecting France?"[27] His answer was that the current liberal hegemony has led ill-informed leftist authors to use anti-liberal arguments in Schmitt's work and, in doing so, serving to update a "Sweet Schmitt." Balibar, whom Zarka and Kriegel obviously resent, was cited as an example. Then, in a serious tone, Zarka added that Schmitt's interpretation of thinkers like Hobbes and Bodin is nothing more than "falsification and phantasmagoria." He then set a very specific goal: "we should leave Schmitt to his ignominy."[28]

More recently, the headline of another issue of *Cités* reads: "Carl Schmitt, the Nazi." This time, no question mark! It includes two of Schmitt's most compromising articles: "The Führer Protects the Law" (1934) and "The German Science of Law in its Fight Against Jewish thought" (1936). In his editorial, Zarka states that his article "summarizes, develops, and completes" the content of his article in *Le Monde*. Again, he attacks Balibar's "strange" approach. The "development" consists in choosing among the hundreds of articles that Schmitt published during his lifetime the two that provide the necessary arguments to demonstrate the thesis. This is a perfect illustration of how all slanderers operate. Zarka's thesis is simple. "The idea that Schmitt is a great jurist and a great 20th century political thinker, whose Nazi texts only reflect a very limited period of his work, is nothing but a legend invented by his supporters, who are spreading throughout the world."[29] This sentence, despite its relaxed style, deserves at least credit for clarity. Of course, Zarka does not wonder why there are so many "Schmitt supporters" around the world. He apparently believes that this is a conspiracy — a global one, which, for unknown, but certainly shameful reasons, drives hundreds of scholars, academics, and experts to develop a "legend" with only one goal in mind: promoting a completely uninteresting "Nazi."

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26. Zarka was managing editor of the first issues of *Cités*, before Michel Prigent replaced him. His assistant, Franck Lessay, is one of the journal's two advisers, and Robert Damien is the chief editor. Damien is also head of research at the CNRS [*Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*], professor of philosophy at the Université de Franche-Comté, and an expert on Gabriel Naudé. Close to François Dagognet, has written books about the "library paradigm" and the "philosophical figure of the Prince's adviser." In 2002, he expressed his disgust for love of country by stating that "etymologically the country is terror." Surprisingly, among the editorial staff of *Cités* there is Jean-François Kervégan, who in the past has written seriously about Schmitt.

27. Yves Charles Zarka, in *Cités* 6 (April 6, 2001), p. 3.

28. In that same issue, there was also an article by Nicolas Tertulian, a member of the editorial committee of *Actuel Marx*, and another hostile 1928 article by Hermann Heller. Dominique Seglard, the French translator of Schmitt's work, wrote the introduction, and Jeffrey Andrew Barash wrote the commentary.

29. Yves Charles Zarka, "Carl Schmitt le nazi," in *Cités*, No. 14 (2003), p. 163.

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Obviously, Zarka is either a compulsive liar and a slanderer of the worst sort, or he is a complete moron.

* * *

Of course, criticism is not only legitimate, but necessary; it is the foundation of intellectual thought. During Schmitt's lifetime, as well as after his death, countless books and articles have been published contradicting or refuting his viewpoint. Some of this criticism, most recently by William E. Scheuermann, Richard Wolin, Mark Lilla, Raphael Gross, and Bernd Ruethers, demonstrates only the authors' taste for slander. By comparison, other criticisms, such as Dolf Sternberger's and Odo Marquard's, have been intelligent and subtle.

Zarka's article in *Le Monde*, which could as well have been published in *Pravda* in Stalin's days, went one step further than the worst criticism. No one before ever had dared to claim that Schmitt's work did not exist. Of course, one might wonder what got into Zarka, who until 2001 had never published one line about Schmitt. Is he acting in his own name or is he merely playing the "useful idiot"? An expert on 17th century, one wonders why he did not stick to his field. He states that he completely disagrees with Schmitt's interpretation of Hobbes' thought. One wonders why he did not just publish his disagreement, rather than resorting to insult and trying to discredit Schmitt with the old *reductio ad hitlerum* device, which not even Leo Strauss, one of Schmitt's critics, would countenance?

Zarka is a multifaceted intellectual. He is head of research at the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*, where he heads the Center for the History of Modern Philosophy and the Thomas Hobbes Center. He teaches political philosophy at the Sorbonne, but never received the title of Professor. He has published books on Hobbes, Machiavelli, Jean Bodin, Rousseau, and Tocqueville, as well as on the notion of sovereignty and the future of the state of Israel.[30] He edits four collections at the PUF, which also publishes *Cités*. A comical (or Orwellian) detail: recently, along with Frank Lessay and John Rogers, Zarka edited three volumes on the philosophical foundations of tolerance.[31]

Zarka is mainly active at the Thomas Hobbes Center, which includes twenty French and foreign members. In this capacity, he became editor of a critical French language edition of *The Complete Works of Hobbes* (17 volumes are

30. See in particular *La décision métaphysique de Hobbes* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1987); *Hobbes et la pensée politique moderne* (Paris: PUF, 1995); and *Quel avenir pour Israël?* (Paris: PUF, 2001).

31. *Les fondements philosophiques de la tolérance: en France et en Angleterre au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: PUF, 2002). The books resulted from a seminar organized at the Sorbonne in 2002-03. If one refers to the "ignominy" of authors with whose ideas one disagrees, one is surely most qualified to discuss tolerance. (What would have happened if Zarka had not been so "tolerant"? Would he have suggested that Schmitt's remains be dug up and deposited on a public road, as the Church suggested for Voltaire's remains?)

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planned). He has also been a guest teacher at various universities abroad (Naples, Jerusalem, Quebec), and has attended countless conferences. In May 1996, he discussed Hobbes in Amsterdam. At the end of May 2001, he attended with Quentin Skinner a conference dedicated to "Hobbes and Political Philosophy in the 20th Century," organized by University College in London. So, the most reasonable explanation is that Zarka could not bear the idea that the French public would have at its disposal a book devoted to Hobbes' thought by Schmitt, a domain he considers to be his own preserve. He thus used this opportunity to settle a score with some leftist anti-liberals. In short, he reacted like a dog about to lose his bone.

* * *

Schmitt published most of his major works during the Weimar Republic.[32] Contrary to popular belief, Schmitt was not an advocate of the "conservative revolution." He told Ernst Niekisch, a great critic of everything Roman, "I am Roman because of my origin, my tradition, and the law." Hostile to every form of organized thought, he rejected most of the German political tradition and looked for inspiration to France (Joseph de Maistre), Italy (Machiavelli), Spain (Donoso Cortés) and England (Thomas Hobbes). His Catholicism, of Augustinian inspiration, emphasizes the counterrevolutionary tradition, which is the foundation for his view of the state. For Schmitt, politics is a dimension of human life directly related to the intensity of confrontational relations. But he is also a theoretician of democracy, and in its name he criticizes liberalism and its ideal of a "government by discussion." As an economic and moral doctrine, liberalism is incompatible with democracy, which is a political doctrine based on the principle that all citizens are equal. This concept is close to Rousseau's. Schmitt inherited his definition of constitutional power from Emmanuel Sièyes.

There is not the slightest trace of anti-Semitism in any of the books Schmitt published before 1933. Moreover, in *Political Romanticism*, he denounces unambiguously any form of racial ideology. When he talks about the "homogeneity" of a people as one of the presuppositions of democracy, he never envisions an ethnic homogeneity, but rather a *political* homogeneity *à la* Rousseau's general will. But Zarka, following Raphael Gross, claims that

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32. See *Political Romanticism* [1919], *op. cit.*; *Die Diktatur: Von den Anfängen des modernen Souveränitätsgedankens bis zum proletarischen Klassenkampf* (Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 1921); *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* [1922], tr. by George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985); *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* [1922], tr. by George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985); *Roman Catholicism and Political Form* [1923], tr. and annotated by G. L. Ulmen (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996); *The Concept of the Political* [1928], tr. and annotated by George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); his book on constitutional theory, *Verfassungslehre* [1928], 5th ed. (Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 1970); and *Legalität und Legitimität* [1932], 2nd ed. (Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 1968).

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anti-Semitism is omnipresent in all of Schmitt's work! A hidden anti-Semitism, of course! Probably, just as hidden as the imaginary brother, "Georg Schmitt" [*sic*], that Gross gives him in his book.[33]

Moreover, during the Weimar Republic Schmitt had numerous Jews among his students. In 1928, he dedicated his *Verfassungslehre* to his friend Fritz Eisler, who had died on the front in 1914. He shows nothing but admiration for Hugo Preuss, one of the authors of the Weimar Constitution, to whom he also devoted a book in 1930. He is also one of the rare "right-wing" authors in Germany whose thought was taken seriously by authors on the Left and even far Left during the Weimar Republic. To cite Jacob Taubes, Walter Benjamin "intensely confronted" Schmitt's work. In 1923, Benjamin read excerpts on sovereignty from the first edition of *Political Theology,* which he cited two years later in one of the chapters of his famous essay on the origin of German baroque drama.[34] On December 9, 1930, Benjamin wrote to Schmitt to announce that he was sending his essay to him, as his friend Albert Salomon had recommended. He points out how thankful he is to Schmitt for his "presentation of the theory of sovereignty in the 17th century." He then adds:" May I add that your earlier works, especially *Die Diktatur*, confirmed my methods of research in the philosophy of art thanks to your own in the philosophy of state."[35] At that time, Benjamin shared a lot of Schmitt's ideas concerning liberalism, but disagreed with his criticism of romanticism. He told Gershom Sholem that *The Concept of the Political* is the most important political book of its time. Numerous works have been devoted to this significant relation.[36] Schmitt never forgot it, and later devoted an appendix to one of his books[37] to Benjamin's book (1956). Salomon, Benjamin's friend, was a sociologist in charge of the social-democratic revue *Die Gesellschaft* from 1928 to 1931. He emigrated in 1933, and two years later settled in the US. The fourth chapter of his book on the tyranny of

33. Raphael Gross, *Carl Schmitt und die Juden* (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 2000). For a critical review of Gross's book, see Günter Maschke, "Der subventionierte Amoklauf," in *JungeFreiheit* (October 20, 2000), p. 16.

34. Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (Berlin: Ernst Rowohlt, 1928).

35. Expurgated from the first edition of Walter Benjamin's correspondence, this letter was published for the first time in 1974. French text in Jacob Taubes, *En divergent accord. A propos de Carl Schmitt* (Paris: Rivages, 2003), pp. 51-52 and 98-99.

36. See, in particular, Samuel Weber, "Taking Exception to Decision: Walter Benjamin and Carl Schmitt," in *Commemorating Walter Benjamin*, special issue of *Diacritics*, Vol. XXII, Nos. 3-4 (Autumn-Winter 1992), pp. 5-18; Annie Dymetman, *O período weimariano como una hermeneutica do excesso. O caso de Walter Benjamin y Carl Schmitt*, PhD thesis (Sao Paulo, 1999); Rafael Gutiérrez Girardot, "Carl Schmitt y Walter Benjamin," in *Cuardenos hispanoamericanos* (2001), pp. 61-78. See also the special issue (No. 5) of the Belgian *Benjamin Journaal*, published in 1997.

37. Carl Schmitt, *Hamlet oder Hekuba: Der Einbruch der Zeit in das Spiel* (Düsseldorf-Cologne: Eugen Diedrichs Verlag, 1956).

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progress[38] also was influenced by Schmitt's *Political Theology*.

Among the people Schmitt interacted with during the Weimar Republic were also a good number of members of (or close to) the Frankfurt School, such as Herbert Marcuse, Otto Bauer, Franz L. Neumann, Otto Kirchheimer, Hans Mayer, *et al.*[39] In the summer of 1932, Kirchheimer and Neumann (whose relation to Schmitt has been discussed by Volker Neumann, Alfons Söllner, and Rainer Erd) attended a conference on constitutional problems organized by the Berlin Business School. The case of Kirchheimer is particularly interesting. After he worked in Paris for the Institute for Social Research [later known as the Frankfurt School] in 1936-37, he emigrated to the US, and lived in New York until 1942. He then worked for the American government until 1955, before he started teaching at the New School for Social Research and Columbia University until his death in 1965. When he returned to Germany after the war, he hurried to see Schmitt, whom he visited regularly between November 1949 and the summer of 1961 (witness Rainer Erd).

In 1922, Schmitt was nominated for a professorship at the University of Bonn, thanks to the support of the Protestant jurist Rudolf Smend, a great adversary of Kelsen and a future Nazi opponent. Ten years later, Schmitt became a professor in Cologne. At that time, having supported the Catholic Center Party and the Bruening government, he used his legal competence to work for General Kurt von Schleicher. Their main goal was to prevent Hitler from coming to power. After 1929, he also was close to the former Secretary of State Johannes Popitz, a future Prussian Finance Minister, who shared his ideas, i.e., the need for a state powerful enough to outlaw extremist parties and whose president would be the "guardian of the Constitution."

In October 1932, Schmitt defended the German Reich against the Prussian government before the Supreme Court in Leipzig, following the "Prussian coup" on July 20, 1932, which allowed Franz von Papen, whose advisor he had become, to suspend the Braun-Severing social democratic government.[40] Also in 1932, in his book *Legalität und Legitimität*, Schmitt advocated banning both the Nazi and the Communist parties, which he called "enemies of the Constitution," and supported the establishment of a four year presidential regime. His goal at the time was to save the Weimar Republic by proclaiming a "state of exception." The day before

38. See Albert Salomon, *Fortschritt als Schicksal und Verhängnis: Betrachtungen zum Ursprung der Soziologie* (Stuttgart: 1957). In 1931, Salomon also praised Schmitt's book about Hugo Preuss: "Hugo Preuss, sein Staatsbegriff und seine Stellung in der deutschen Staatslehre," in *Die Gesellschaft* (March, 1931), p. 286.

39. See Ellen Kennedy, "Carl Schmitt and the Frankfurt School," in *Telos* 71 (Spring 1987), pp. 37-66.

40. See Gabriel Seiberth, *Anwalt des Reiches. Carl Schmitt and der Prozess "Preussen contra Reich" vor dem Staatsgerichthof* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001), which summarizes Schmitt's anti-Nazi positions at that time. See also Lutz Berthold's important book, *Carl Schmitt und der Staatsnotstandsplan am Ende der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 1999).

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the Reichstag elections, scheduled for July 31, he called for a vote against the Nazi Party in an article in the *Tägliche Rundschau*, citing several excerpts from *Legalität und Legitimität*. He wrote: "Whoever gives National Socialism the majority . . . will act badly. It will allow this ideologically still immature movement to modify the Constitution . . . . Germany will end up in the hands of this group."[41]

Robert Wistrich writes: "Even though he was hostile to Weimar pluralism, Schmitt opposed Left and Right extremists before the Nazis took power, going so far as to support General von Schleicher's efforts to stop or to end the Nazi venture."[42] After Hitler took power, von Papen asked Schmitt to contribute to the drafting of the Enabling Act of April 7, 1933. Schmitt joined the Nazi Party on May 1. He was appointed by Hermann Goering as Secretary of the Prussian State, and Hans Frank put him in charge of the *Deutsche Juristen-Zeitung*. That same year, he headed the group of professors of the National-Socialist League of German Jurists.

How can one explain Schmitt's joining the Nazi Party? There has been a lot a talk about "opportunism," which is an acceptable hypothesis. Nevertheless, during the Weimar Republic, he did not appear to be particularly opportunistic. The fact that Hitler came into power *legally* might have played a role in his decision. But most likely Schmitt thought (wrongly) that he could define the new regime's legal orientations. Like many others at the time (Franz Neumann for one), he obviously had underestimated the strength of the ideological orientations of the new regime. Rather than being an opportunist, Schmitt believed Nazi ideology to be opportunistic, and he thought it could be bent in any direction. This was a fatal error. It explains why he encountered so many problems during the Third Reich and after 1945. At any rate, in the next three years Schmitt published a series of articles that can be considered unacceptable and which did not add anything to his stature. While they must be read very carefully, as the Nazi authorities did, they ultimately condemned the author with both the Nazis and his critics.

After 1933, one of Schmitt's main concerns was the state, rather than to the party. His thesis was always that there is no totalitarian state, but only a totalitarian party, whose demands have to be restrained. He absolutely rejected the idea of a party-state. Moreover, he was not interested in the idea of the people, which in his eyes has no specific political value: in *Legalität und Legitimität*, he wrote that the people are not able to discuss, lead, or create norms, but only to say yes or no. In *Staat, Bewegung, Volk*, a book he published in 1933, he expressed implicitly, but unambiguously this sentiment. Opposing the official doctrine, he asserted that the state takes precedence over the "movement" and the "people." As André Doremus has noted: "This text, as well as the *Leviathan* five years later, has been received very negatively by the circles sharing the

41. Carl Schmitt, "Der Missbrauch der Legalität," in *Tägliche Rundschau* (July 19, 1932).

42. Robert Wistrich, *Who's Who in Nazi Germany* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982), pp. 275-276.

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regime's sensibilities."[43] He added: "During the three years that Schmitt belonged to the regime . . . he discretely, but constantly defended the idea of a strong state against the prevalence of a single party, which meant the identification of an ideology with a political power without control."[44] This is also Taubes' opinion: "Schmitt's concern was that the party and the chaos do not take over power and that the state remain in control at all costs!"[45]

This explains Schmitt's support of the June 1934 purge ("the Night of the Long Knives"), as expressed in "The Führer Protects the Law," which is a comment on Hitler's July 13, 1934 speech before the Reichstag. In Schmitt's opinion, the purge eliminated the most extremist wing of the party and allowed the state to reaffirm its authority.[46] Also, the formula "total state" that he used at the time should not be misunderstood, because he simultaneously adopted the idea of "concrete order thinking," inspired by the "institutional" thesis of the French jurist Maurice Hauriou, to replace his former decisionism. Just as for the jurist Ernst Forsthoff, this idea betrays no "particular sign of totalitarianism."[47] It only means that Schmitt supported the integration of all aspects of public life under the aegis of the state, and denied any tendency of the state to invade private life. Schmitt was hostile to the idea of a "quantitative" concept of the total state, which abolishes this distinction, and supported a "qualitative" concept based on the ability to distinguish the political from the non-political. For Schmitt, the "total state" represents a plebiscitary dictatorship imposed in a state of exception, which means it is only a temporary situation embraced by the spirit, if not the letter of the constitution. As Renato Cristi is forced to admit, "if totalitarianism means that the state assimilates and metabolizes civil society, [then it is clear] that Schmitt never endorsed . . . such a totalitarian concept."[48]

Clearly, that concept had to be "rejected by the Nazis, who interpreted it as

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43. In Carl Schmitt, *Ex captivitate salus. Expériences des années 1945-1947* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2003), p. 108.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

45. Taubes, *En divergent accord*, *op. cit.*, p. 110. See also Gary Ulmen, "Between the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. Continuity in Carl Schmitt's Thought," in *Telos* 119 (Spring 2001), pp. 18-31, which shows that if there is "continuity" in Schmitt's thought before and after 1933, it is not related to Nazism.

46. Doremus points out that the purge in question, during which General von Schleicher and his wife were killed, at the time had "mostly received approval from the public who interpreted it as Hitler's way of cleaning up the party's turbulent entourage and an indication that he had decided to become a perfect statesman. On July 3, the press already thanked the Führer and Goering for having avoided a German civil war" [in Schmitt, *Ex Captivitate Salus*, *op. cit.*, p. 111]. Moreover, in his article, Schmitt identifies as "crimes" the "special actions" perpetrated during or after the three day period, which were not related to the Führer's action, and were not authorized by him."

47. Doremus, in Schmitt, *Ex Captivitate Salus*, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

48. Renato Cristi, *Carl Schmitt and Authoritarian Liberalism. Strong State, Free Economy* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), p. 5.

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the state's confiscation of the power of decision that can belong only to the party and its leader."[49] Moreover, it did not include any "*völkisch* [i.e., populist in the Nazi sense]" element. That is why the Nazi press always denounced the idea of the "total state," just as it criticized "total mobilization" (Ernst Jünger) or "*Stato totalitario*" (Giovanni Gentile), and countered with the idea of a state based solely on a *Volksgemeinschaft* [community of the people].[50]

Zarka does not miss the opportunity to emphasize the fact that the word "race" appears (if only occasionally) in several of Schmitt's texts at the time. But the real question is not whether Schmitt used the term (everybody was more or less compelled to do so), but rather whether even the smallest aspect of Schmitt's political doctrine was based on race. The answer is no. Schmitt always refused to root politics in biology or race. As Balibar has put it, Schmitt was strongly opposed to "biological" racism, whose naturalistic and scientistic references (the pseudo-Darwinism of *Rassenkunde*) directly contradicted his own philosophy of history."[51] Even Hugues Rabault, who maintains that "anti-Judaism is rampant in Schmitt's thought," has to admit that Schmitt "never supported the biological doctrine of races."[52] His anti-Judaism is not related to race, but to traditional Catholic tradition. As Heinrich Meier has noted, "his roots are entrenched in his faith in Revelation," and he belongs to the "horror-rich tradition of Christian anti-Semitism." One must be aware of these subtleties, imperceptible to Zarka, in order to understand the attacks against Schmitt during the Third Reich. Otherwise, they are incomprehensible.

Contrary to the claims of Schmitt's opponents, the Nazi attacks against him started very early. Not only was his 1933 book, *Staat, Bewegung, Volk*, received very reservedly, in the same year the jurist Otto Koellreuter criticized him for being a conservative, philo-Semitic and "liberal" Catholic.[53] These accusations, repeated during the following years in a series of books, directly or indirectly were taken over by other Nazi jurists, among them Roland Freisler, Gustav Adolf Walz, Hans Helfritz, Karl Larenz, Theodor Maunz, Helmut Nicolai, Hans Gerber,

49. Doremus, in Schmitt, *Ex Captivitate Salus*, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

50. See, in particular, Reinhard Höhn, *Die Wandlung im Staatsrechtlichen Denken* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1934); Otto Koellreutter, *Der deutsche Führerstaat* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr-Paul Siebeck, 1934); Alfred Rosenberg, "Totaler Staat," in *Völkischer Beobachter* (January 9, 1934); and, above all, Roland Freisler, "Totaler Staat? — Nationalsozialistischer Staat," in *Deutsche Justiz* (1934), pp. 43-45.

51. Balibar, preface to Schmitt, *Le Léviathan*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

52. Hugues Rabault, "Carl Schmitt zur Einführung," in *Cités* (April 10, 2002), pp. 179-180. Rabault justifies the lack of hostility toward Jews before 1933 by the fact that "his anti-Judaism combined with his conservatism inspired by Catholicism could not be expressed openly during the Weimar Republic" (*ibid.*, p. 180). This assumption is completely ridiculous, since between 1918 and 1933 the number of anti-Semitic books published in Weimar Germany was no less than during the Third Reich.

53. Otto Koellreutter, *Volk und Staat in der Verfassungskrise. Zugleich eine Auseinandersetzung mit Carl Schmitt* (Berlin: Junker und Duennhaupt, 1933).

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Hans Helmut Dietze, and Julius Binder.[54] In 1934, according to General von Fritzsch's testimony, Schmitt declared in front of superior officers that a military putsch against Hitler would be legitimate. Two years later, the SS newspaper, *Das Schwarze Korps*, published two sensational articles (on December 3 and 10, 1936), whose (anonymous) author flatters himself for finally exposing Schmitt as a venomous opponent of the regime. Schmitt was accused of "opportunism," "political Catholicism," and of having strong ties to Jews.[55] At the same time, the SS drew up a damning file against him,[56] mentioning the book he wrote about Hugo Preuss in 1930 and his relation with other Jews such as Fritz Eisler, Franz Blei, Erich Kaufmann, Moritz Julius Bonn, and Hermann Heller. From then on, the Gestapo placed Schmitt under close surveillance.

Rosenberg's department also joined the SS in attacking Schmitt. In 1937, Rosenberg published an internal file in which he denounced Schmitt's hostility toward any racial ideology and his "sympathy for Jews." The text emphasized that Schmitt's theories contribute "to submitting the National-Socialist state to the power of the Catholic Church."[57] In July 1939, a new report issued by Rosenberg's department confirmed the same accusations. It seems that neither Himmler nor Rosenberg understood that Schmitt was a "philosophical Nazi." But at that time Schmitt's fate was settled. In 1936, even before the *Schwarze Korps* articles appeared, Schmitt was forced to resign from the *Fachgruppe Hochschullehrer des NS-Juristenbund*, and, later, as leader of the *Deutsche Juristen-Zeitung*. He also lost control of the collection, "Der deutsche Staat der Gegenwart," published by the Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt in Hamburg. Zarka assures his readers that "contrary to a persistent rumor, Schmitt did not lose all his official positions after 1936."[58] Redecker claims that "he maintained his high positions until 1945."[59] In fact, Schmitt lost all of his official positions in 1936. He retained only his tenure as a professor at the University of Berlin and his title as advisor to the Prussian State. The latter was a sham, because after 1936 the Prussian Council was never reconvened, since the Nazis had liquidated the Prussian State. Moreover, Schmitt was banned from publishing in all

54. Otto Koellreutter, *Der deutsche Führerstaat*, *op. cit.*; *Volk and Staat in der Weltanschauung des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin-Charlottenburg: Pan Verlag, 1935); *Deutsches Verfassungsrecht* (Berlin: Junker und Duennhaupt, 1936).

55. See Mario Zeck, *Das schwarze Korps* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2002), pp. 246-248.

56. This file can now be consulted at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich (RFSS/SD-Hauptamt, IfZ, AKZ 4062/69, Fa 503/1-2)

57. "Der Staatsrechtslehrer Prof. Dr. Carl Schmitt," in *Mitteilungen zur weltanschaulichen Lage*, Vol. III (January 1, 8, 1937), pp. 1-15. The complete version of this text has been published by Günter Maschke: "Das 'Amt Rosenberg' gegen Carl Schmitt. Ein dokument aus dem Jahre 1937," in *Etappe* (October 2, 1988), pp. 96-11.

58. Yves Charles Zarka, "Carl Schmitt le nazi," in *Cités*, No. 14 (2003), p. 161.

59. Redecker, "Schmitt ou le fantasme de la politique pure," *op. cit.*

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Nazi Party publications.[60]

After 1936-37, Schmitt became part of the "internal emigration."[61] He stopped writing about current events, and devoted himself to studies of Hobbes, the evolution of international law, and the antithesis of land and sea. He also formulated his doctrine of *Großsraum*, which was designed to demonstrate that the political world is always a "*pluriversum*," in which one can recognize a secularized metamorphosis of the old principle of *cujus regio, ejus religio* [whose is the territory, his is the religion]. Specifically, a *Großsraum* is a large space dominated by a power with a distinctive political concept. Schmitt derived the concept of *Grossraum* from the Monroe Doctrine, which was formulated by the American President James Monroe in 1823. Its goal was to prevent foreign powers from invading the Western Hemisphere. In any case, it should not be confused with the Nazi concept of *Lebensraum* (living space). For instance, Schmitt stresses that the "European *Großraum*" cannot be identified with the "Reich," just as Brazil or Argentina cannot be identified with the US. Turning the notion of *Grossraum* into a "*völkisch* concept" (as Bernd Rüthers has done) or claiming that it "justified, in theory, the Führer's Pan-German expansionism"[62] is grotesque.

Here again, Nazi theoreticians were more discerning. In 1939, when Schmitt's little book, *Völkerrechtliche Grossraumordnung mit Interventionsverbot für raumfremde Mächte,* was published, it was immediately denounced in Rosenberg's *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, and Schmitt again was consigned to silence. Between 1941 and 1943, Schmitt's doctrine of *Grossraum* also became subject to a series of frontal attacks by Reinhard Höhn in the SS journal, *Reich-Volksordnung-Lebensraum* (which Höhn himself published, along with Werner Best, Wilhelm Stuckhart, and Gerhard Klopfer.) Again, Höhn denounced Schmitt for dismissing any biological or racial consideration in his definition of *Grossraum*, and insisted that Schmitt's theory was incompatible with the Nazi doctrine of *Lebensraum*.[63] This has led Joseph W. Bendersky to conclude that Schmitt "never provided any ideological justifications for the Nazis' foreign policy."[64]

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60. The only exceptions were three articles published in 1940-42 in *Das Reich*, a publication headed by Eugen Mündler, and later by Hans Schwarz van Berk. It was rare for a non-party publication to open its columns to writers not belonging to the party. It published articles by Rudolf Augstein, future manager of *Der Spiegel*, Margret Boveri, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, Werner Höfer, Joachim Fernau, *et al.*

61. About this notion, see No. 7 (2002) of *Carnets Ernst Jünger*, which includes a good summary by Gérard Imhoff ("L'immigration intérieure. Mythe ou réalité?" pp. 17-35), as well as an extensive bibliography.

62. Nicolas Tertulian, "Le juriste et le Fuehrer," in *Cités* (April 6, 2001), p. 45.

63. See Reinhard Höhn, "Grossraumordnung und völkisches Rechtsdenken. Zugleich eine Auseinandersetzung mit der Schrift von Carl Schmitt, "Völkerrechtliche Grossraumordnung mit Interventionsverbot für raumfremde Mächte," in *Reich-Volk-Lebensraum* (1941), pp. 256-288.

64. Joseph W. Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt, Theorist for the Reich* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 259.

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During the war, Schmitt was invited to attend conferences abroad, i.e., in Lisbon, Madrid, Paris, and Bucharest. The Nazi authorities tried in vain to block his nomination to the Spanish Royal Academy. His manuscript on *nomos*, published as a book in 1950,[65] was to appear in a collection honoring his friend Johannes Popitz on his 60th birthday (November 2, 1944), but Popitz was sentenced to death and executed for participating in the failed plot to kill Hitler on July 20, 1944.

At the end of the war, Schmitt was arrested by the Russians, and then released. On September 25, 1945, the Americans arrested him, probably at the request of Karl Löwenstein, who at the time was the legal advisor for the military occupation government in Berlin. Schmitt was held prisoner at the Berlin/Lichterfeld-Süd prison camp, then at Wannsee. Banned from publishing, he was released on October 10, 1946. Six months later, he was arrested again and interrogated at length by Robert W. Kempner, a deputy public prosecutor for the international military tribunal at Nuremberg. Kempner ascertained that there was no reason to pursue charges against Schmitt and decided to dismiss the case.[66] In these interviews, Schmitt said: "I wanted to give National Socialism a meaning of my own." He added that in 1936 he had "renounced the devil," and said that "considering the legal and administrative participation of the state apparatus in Hitler's crimes, one can state that these crimes were made possible by the legitimacy granted to the civil service."

After the war, Schmitt supported the creation of the Constitutional Supreme Court in Karlsruhe, and one of Schmitt's former students, Friesenhahn, was named president. In 1950, Schmitt published a more personal book, *Ex Captivitate Salus*, in which he revealed, with moving lucidity, the fruit of his meditations about the years immediately following the war. The book is dedicated to the memory of his friend Wilhelm Ahlmann, who also was involved in the July 20 plot to kill Hitler, and who committed suicide in December 1944 to protect his relatives. Schmitt compared his own situation to that of Plato, who did not consider it beneath him to give advice to the tyrant of Syracuse. He identified himself with Benito Cereno, the hero of Herman Melville's book, and called himself a "Christian Epimetheus," in honor of Konrad Weiss, whom he considered the "last conscious representative of the *jus publicum Europaeum*, its last master and researcher in an existential way."

Like Heidegger, Schmitt became a supporter of National Socialism in 1933. But the Nazis were no more Schmittian than they were supporters of Heidegger's philosophy.[67] Schmitt, who never met or talked to Hitler, Göbbels, Himmler, or Rosenberg personally, soon realized that his attempt to build bridges between Nazi ideology and his own ideas failed for the simple reason that he "never ideologically

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65. Carl Schmitt, *The* Nomos *of the Earth in the International Law of the* Jus Publicum Europaeum, tr. and annotated by G. L. Ulmen (New York: Telos Press, 2003).

66. Recently, these interviews were published in French. See Carl Schmitt, *Ex Captivitate Salus*, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-77. The text has also been translated into English, Italian, Japanese and Serbo-Croatian.

67. Schmitt met Heidegger only once, in 1944.

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converted to Nazism."[68] According to Rabault: "Schmitt actually tried to adjust the doctrine of National Socialism to his own fundamental positions, rather than supporting its ideology."[69] Doremus put it even more clearly: "Schmitt thought he would be strong enough to direct from the inside the political course of a movement and a party he considered to be devoid of thought. This ideologist, who stood outside of all ideologies, unaware of the real intentions of Hitler's regime because of his deep belief in the power of law, which he confused with his passion for Germany, had at first been welcomed by a party enthusiastic about such an unexpected recruit. The illusion only lasted one year."[70]

In *Ex Captivitate Salus*, Schmitt mentions three Latin formulas: *tyrannum licet adulari adulare* (one is allowed to worship the tyrant); *tyrannum licet decipere* (one is allowed to deceive the tyrant); and *tyrannum licet occidere* (one is allowed to kill the tyrant). Commenting on this passage, Taubes writes: "These three stages allegorically describe Carl Schmitt's story under the National Socialist tyranny. Adulation in the beginning, then misleading by vague refutations, and finally supporting groups favorable to the demise of the regime."[71] The same idea was expressed in an article published in France after Schmitt's death: "After he warned against it (1932), he suddenly, in 1933, supported the new regime. He did so in the spirit of a great historical piety (he relied on Leon Bloy) and claimed he could single-handedly bring the doctrine to these men he despised. Some of them would soon, in 1936, become dangerous enemies." This obituary was published . . . in *Le Monde*.[72]

* * *

Returning to Schmitt's Hobbes' book, which provoked Zarka's wrath, it was originally published in July 1938,[73] and consists of a 1937 text and the text of two lectures. One of these lectures was delivered on April 12, 1938 in Kiel,[74] during a symposium organized by the Hobbes Society in honor of the 350th anniversary of the birth of the author of the *Leviathan*. Constantly reprinted in Germany (the last

68. Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt: Theorist for the Reich*, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

69. Hugues Rabault, "Carl Schmitt et la mystique de l'Etat total," in *Critique* (Nov. 2001), p. 864.

70. Doremus, in Schmitt, *Ex Captivitate Salus*, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8. See also Chris Thornhill, *Political Theory in Modern Germany. An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), pp. 84-90.

71. Taubes, *En divergent accord*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

72. André Doremus, "Un témoin exceptionnel," in *Le Monde* (April 14-15, 1985). Yes, in *Le Monde* -- but that was 18 years ago when it was another newspaper.

73. Carl Schmitt, *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes. Sinn und Fehlschlag eines politischen Symbols* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1938).

74. In his essay on Hobbes' role in Schmitt's thought, Helmut Rumpf insists that, during the conference, Hobbes was never called a precursor of National Socialism. Concerning Paul Ritterbusch's opening speech (cited by Schmitt), it could not even be published. See *Carl Schmitt und Thomas Hobbes. Ideelle Beziehungen und aktuelle Bedeutung mit einer Abhandlung über: Die frühschriffien Carl Schmitts* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1973).

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time by Klett-Cotta in 1995), it has been translated twice into Spanish (1941 and 1997), into Japanese in 1972, into Italian in 1986, into Korean in 1992, and into English in 1996. In France, it is the twelfth Schmitt book translated since 1972, mainly by Gallimard, PUF, and Seuil.

For Zarka, "Schmitt does not reveal concealed meanings in Hobbes' work, but he is the main obstacle to its understanding." Compare this pithy judgment, which is not supported by any arguments, with Taubes' opinion that this book is probably the most important one Schmitt ever wrote, with Habermas' view, that it is "Schmitt's fundamental work," or with Günter Maschke's, who calls it "the key to all of his work." After denouncing "attempts at intimidation" and the "retrospective boycott that feeble minds call an act of political morality," in his preface, Balibar invites the reader to become acquainted with "one of the most inventive, provocative thought of the 20th century," stressing how "enlightening and profound" Schmitt's reading of Hobbes really is.[75] Helmut Rumpf thinks that Schmitt is "not only one of the most significant Hobbes interpreters in German, but also his spiritual heir in the 20th century."[76] Obviously, Zarka has never read Rumpf's work.[77]

The truth is that Schmitt thought about Hobbes all his life, and in *Ex Captivitate Salus* he introduced him as his "friend" and "brother." Referring to the famous maxim *auctoritas, non veritas facit legem* [authority, not truth decides the law], for Hobbes the *auctoritas* was the *summa potestas* [supreme power] — he sees in Hobbes not only the founder of the modern state, but also a "typical representative of the decisionist type of thinking."[78] In that respect, he is one of those who facilitate an understanding of what politics is. The theme of his Hobbes book is the lack of fulfillment of modern rationalism. He tries to solve the problem haunting Hobbes: if individuals participate in a society to protect their existence, and if the absolute evil for them is violent death, then how can society convince them to sacrifice their lives for it?[79] Moreover, Schmitt states that "of all the great

75. Balibar, preface to Schmitt, *Le Léviathan*, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

76. Rumpf, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

77. Neither has he read George Schwab's introduction to the American edition of Schmitt's book, nor Carlo Galli's introduction to the Italian edition, nor Günter Maschke's epilogue to the 1982 German edition. Obviously, he is unaware of the contrasting commentaries of Helmut Quaritsch (1974), Francesco Viala (1979), Klaus Schulz (1980), Alessandro Biral (1981), Herfried Muenkler (1984), Bernard Willms (1987), Antonio Caracciolo (1989), Manfred Lauermann (1990), Gershom Weiler (1994), Günter Meuter (1995), Marco Caserta (1996), Horst Bredekamp (1999), Riccardo Panatoni (2000), and Jorge Eugenio Dotti (2002), to mention only a few authors who have worked on the relation between Schmitt and Hobbes. One can just imagine the expression on Zarka's face if he learned that in September 1980 a symposium organized in Washington D.C. by The American Political Science Association chose as its topic: "Carl Schmitt, the Modern Equivalent of Hobbes."

78. Carl Schmitt, *Théologie politique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), p. 43.

79. Spinoza's, Moses Mendelsohn's and Friedrich Julius Stahl's criticism are included in the book. Zarka makes much of this, but adds nothing new. He obviously has forgotten that Hobbes defined Jews as "a race eager for prophets" (in *De Cive*, Ch. XVI, §15).

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thinkers of his time, Hobbes had an inclination for esoteric veils. He sees in the leviathan an "esoteric symbol," and in the book, which carries his name, he sees a "completely esoteric work." He even went as far as to write a presentation for his own book. It was supposed to appear on the back cover, but was finally withdrawn by the publisher. It started with the following words: "Caution! You have heard about the great Leviathan and you want to know more by reading this book? Caution, dear friend! This book is esoteric cover to cover, and its intrinsic esotericism will become more and more obvious as you delve deeper and deeper into it."[80]

Attributing an "esoteric" approach to Hobbes — "he only divulged half of his thought" — reminds one of his commentator. Like Hobbes, Schmitt states that indirectly he tries to say what he could not have expressed clearly because of the constraints of the time. He, too, only divulged "half of his real thought." In 1981, he said about his work: "It is an esoteric book for three reasons: 1) it is a work that has a life of its own; it is independent as a myth; 2) this book does not hide anything and that is why it gives the impression that it is hiding the most important thing; and 3) it carries everything inside." Zarka must have a hard time understanding any of this.

In his 1938 preface, Schmitt also writes: "The name *leviathan* throws a long shadow; it has fallen on the work of Thomas Hobbes's work and will in all likelihood also fall on this little book." These revealing words confirm the parallel that Schmitt implicitly draws with Hobbes' fate during the English Civil War, "lonely, as every pioneer; misunderstood, as is everyone whose political thought does not gain acceptance among his own people; unrewarded, as one who opened a gate which others marched through." Later, he added: "When the only public sphere in a country is the one organized by state power, then the spirit of the people takes a secret path that leads inside: then, the antagonistic force of silence and serenity grows." This clearly alludes to the internal immigration, and Schmitt adds: "Hobbes was the epitome of internal immigration . . . . Consequently, he was genuine."

Therefore, it is easier to understand why Schmitt could explicitly, in *Ex Captivitate Salus*, compare his 1938 book on Hobbes to Jünger's *On the Marble Cliffs*, published in 1939.[81] Both portray an allegoric or concealed criticism of Nazism. Does this claim seem excessive, coming from someone for whom the "German catastrophe" was equivalent to what the Peloponnesian War was for Thucydides? Maybe. Nevertheless, as Palaver writes, "when his book was published, Schmitt felt that his attitude toward the Nazi regime had been critical."[82]

80. The text of this presentation has been published as an appendix to the correspondence between Schmitt and Armin Mohler. See Carl Schmitt, *Briefwechsel mit einem seiner Schüler* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), pp. 38-39.

81. Ernst Jünger, *On the Marble Cliffs*, tr. by Stuart Hood (New York: New Directions, 1947).

82. Schmitt, *Le Léviathan*, p. 222. At the end of the text, Palaver talks repeatedly about "criticism of the internal forces of Nazism," about "distancing themselves," about "critical distance from Hitler's regime."

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Maschke, Bendersky, and Noack all share this opinion.[83]

Anyway, Schmitt was not mistaken: his "little book" was met with profound silence from the official press. The only mention came from Koellreutter, who expressly stated that the Hobbesian concept of the state "does not have anything else to say to us today."[84] This reaction is not surprising, since it is known that the Third Reich did not like Hobbes because of his views on statism.[85]

* * *

"Do Schmitt's and Heidegger's political positions discredit, *ipso facto,* all those who read and interpret them, as Jacques Derrida claims? This is absurd, and comes from the denial of a debate that deserves to take place." These lines by Daniel Bensaid were published a few days after Zarka's pathetic article appeared in *Le Monde.*[86] Bensaid is right, of course, but it is not enough to demand a debate. One must see reality as it is. First of all, one must assess the increasing extent of Schmitt's reception, which disproves Zarka's statements.

Some of Schmitt's works were translated into French in the late 1920s, but they did not have a major impact. One of Schmitt's first translators was the banker Pierre Linn, whose wife was Jewish. He and Joseph Vialatoux belonged to the Circle of Meudon, which met regularly with Jacques and Raissa Maritain. Schmitt's work made a strong impression on René Capitant, an early critic of the Nazis[87] and the future Minister of Justice (he was also one of the founders of the constitution of the Fifth Republic). Schmitt's work began to be translated systematically in France at the beginning of the 1970's. The two people who

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83. Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt, op. cit.*, pp. 244-246; Paul Noack, *Carl Schmitt. Eine Biographie* (Berlin-Frankfurt a/M.: Ullstein-Propylaen, 1993), pp. 225-228.

84. Otto Koellreutter, *Reichsverwaltungsblatt* (September 17, 1938), p. 806.

85. In an article he wrote in his youth, Helmut Schelsky, referring to the party's viewpoint, sang the praises of Hobbes, mainly because he had condemned all forms of political theology. See "Die Totalität des Staates bei Hobbes," in *Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie* (1937-38), pp. 176-193. Of course, this is totally unacceptable for Schmitt. Palaver notes: "First of all, Schmitt's *Leviathan* answers Schelsky and others critics in the party" (*op. cit.*, p. 204). Joseph Vialatoux has depicted Hobbes, if not as a precursor of modern totalitarianism, at least as "the abstract theoretician of state totalitarianism." See *La cité de Hobbes. Théorie de l'Etat totalitaire* (Lyon: Chronique Sociale de France, 1935). René Capitant questions this thesis, insisting on the rationalistic, nominalistic, and individualistic foundations of Hobbes' philosophy of the state, which he opposes to the organistic mysticism of National Socialism. See "Hobbes et l'Etat totalitaire," in *Archives de philsophie du droit et de sociologie juridique* (1938), pp. 46-75. See also Hubert R. Rottleuthner, "Leviathan oder Behemoth? Zur Hobbes-Rezeption im Nationalsozialismus und ihrer Neuauflage," in Steffen Harbordt, ed., *Wissenschaft und Nationalsozialismus, Zur Stellung der Staatslehre, Staatsphilosophie, Psychologie, Naturwissenschaften und der Universität zum Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Technische Universitäet Berlin, 1983), pp. 54-81.

86. Daniel Bensaid, in *L'Humanité* (December 9, 2002).

87. See Olivier Beaud, "René Capitant et sa critique de l'idéologie nazie, 1933-1939," in *Revue française d'histoire des idées politiques* (2001), pp. 351-378.

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(re)introduced this work in France were Raymond Aron and Julien Freund. Freund was in the Resistance and was arrested several times by the Gestapo. In 1972, in the preface to *The Concept of the Political,* Freund wrote: "I was Carl Schmitt's friend and I considered it an honor." It was published by Calmann-Lévy in the collection "Liberté de l'esprit," managed by Aron. In his *Mémoires*, Aron wrote that he considered Schmitt to be a direct heir of Max Weber.[88] At that time, Alexandre Kojève surprised some people when he declared that Schmitt was "the only person in Germany worth talking to."

* * *

Zarka cannot understand that some intellectuals, who were not Nazis, could have compromised themselves with Nazism for a while, but never become Nazis. He fails to realize that by calling Schmitt a Nazi he uses the same slanderous methods used by the Nazis. But, above all, he does not realize that by exonerating him from the sin of opportunism (Schmitt did not commit any mistakes in 1933, he just followed his own inclination), he retrospectively legitimates the Nazi Party's intellectual ambitions. The goal of this despicable campaign is all too obvious: to prevent the reader from making up his own mind, to ban access to Schmitt's book, to surround his work with a *cordon sanitaire*, to issue an order of silence.

In fact, after the publication of Zarka's article, nothing more has been published about *The Leviathan*. With only a few exceptions, the same can be said with respect to Taubes' *En divergent accord* and two other of Schmitt's books translated into French in 2003, *Ex capivitate salus* and *La valeur de l'Etat et la signification de l'individu*.[89] The message has gotten through. As in totalitarian regimes, the party's press dictates what should not be mentioned. *Le Monde* says: *Achtung*! One must follow the orders of the *Kommandatur*. As for Schmitt's supporters, they were very careful not to react: one can never be too careful, especially when one's career is at stake. As for the French university, the fact that it is still paying Zarka, after he wrote such an article, shows how little it cares for respect, intellectual tolerance, debates about ideas, or even plain intelligence or culture.

88. The relation between Schmitt and Weber's thought has been acknowledged by numerous authors, beginning with Georg Lukács and Hannah Arendt. It has been particularly well demonstrated by Wolfgang J. Mommsen in his work on *Max Weber et la politique allemande* (Paris: PUF, 1985). Taubes, who also considered Schmitt as one of the most famous of Max Weber's successors, went as far as to introduce him as "his legitimate son."

89. Carl Schmitt, *La valeur de l'Etat et la signification de l'individu* (Genève: Droz, 2003).

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The Mussolini Fallacy on Iraq[1]

Rick Johnstone

Now that the two main justifications for the war in Iraq (weapons of mass destruction, and 9/11) are proving to be rather bogus (as Wolfowitz himself has admitted), the fall-back has become the "bad regime." But to say there is now one less bad regime in the world is a bit like saying Mussolini made the trains run on time. This "Mussolini fallacy," as it could be called, begs the old question of whether the end justifies the means. Obviously, with enough power you can do good things. But what else is new? Just because one can, does not make it right, and just because one win a war does not make the issue go away. And that is indeed the issue here: whether war is a legitimate tool for regime change. It hardly ever is. Normally, such use of force is only justified in cases of national self-defense against aggression (e.g., Pearl Harbor, 9/11), or multilateral peace-keeping (e.g., UN humanitarian intervention in genocidal civil wars). Neither of these concern regime change as such, though this may occur as a byproduct of such "just" use of force.

What is almost universally opposed, for good reason, is taking the law into one's own hands, because then there is no leg to stand on when one becomes a victim of someone else's aggression. This idea of the rule of law is, of course a classic liberal rejection of both fascism and communism (right and left versions of "might-is-right" and "the end justifies the means"). And the global principle of state sovereignty is an extension of that (as globalized even further, into international law and custom, by the whole post-war UN system). The fact that bad things obviously do happen within states (especially in some) has never been widely accepted as a justification for unilateral war by one state for "regime change" against another. So the current refrain, of how bad Iraq was and how much better it is now, does not settle the matter. Yet, some think it does. And it is ironic that defenders of the West, who have always rejected the Mussolini fallacy in their liberal concern about the legitimate means (and not just good ends) of change, now use it to justify the war in Iraq. Either it is a fallacy or it is not, but one cannot have it both ways. One cannot both deplore and defend the illegitimate use of force.

Illegitimate? That is why, in all the years of the apartheid regime in South

1. This note, written in the Summer of 2003, is a critique of the whole idea of "regime-change" invasion, rather than of post-invasion developments. Since the latter do not affect the validity of the former critique (and may indeed confirm it), it is being published in its original form, so as to preserve its main focus on a key issue: the dangerous and unprecedented violation of the post-war United Nations system.

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Africa, regime change through war was never on the cards. This is an important example for two reasons. If any regime clearly deserved to be changed, this was it. And there was also a global consensus about that: it was one of the few things, in fact, that the West and the communists agreed on. Yet despite all that, there was never any question, in all those years, of invading South Africa to end apartheid by force. There was never any declared war on apartheid.

This example is a good reminder of just how unprecedented it is, as a violation of international law, for one state to invade another just to end a "bad regime" that mistreats its own people. Unfortunately, there is no shortage of those, but that does not normally justify war. Of course, it is a blessing that Saddam's regime has gone. But while the troops are still in Kuwait, why not liberate the women there, who (despite the Gulf War for "freedom") still cannot vote? And why not invade Saudi Arabia and Iran to liberate the women and dissidents there, who make up over half the population? For that matter, why not invade Zimbabwe? After all, is not Robert Mugabe a weapon of mass destruction?

Take Cuba, for example. The main reason the US did not try to change communist regimes by force was because of their military power and the suicidal nature of nuclear war. But the collapse of the Soviet Union changed all that. So why not invade Cuba, especially now that Castro, in recent arrests and executions, has just confirmed what a vicious dictator he still is? The answer is that it would not go down too well in the rest of the world. One just does not do that kind of thing (unless perhaps there is a lot of oil involved). What if China said it was going to do some regime change in Israel (because of weapons of mass destruction and the mistreatment of Palestinians) and started bombing Tel Aviv?

This is not to be naive about enemies. 9/11 showed that the West is indeed faced with ruthless new enemies in the stateless terrorists of al-Qaeda, and it has every right to defend itself against them and their known supporters by force. That is why so many people supported the American-led war against the Taliban, and would have been more supportive of the Iraq war if there had been the same clear link to al-Qaeda. But there was not. On the contrary, the critics said, this so-called war against terrorism might lead to more, rather than less terrorism in the future. And who knows, that may prove to be true, or at least truer than the weapons of mass destruction. As far as those weapons are concerned, as a "*casus belli*" the issue is not just whether they are found or not, but the fact that other states have them too, and that alternatives to invasion (such as containment, deterrence, inspections) were becoming increasingly effective (as Hans Blix is only too glad to remind America now).

Nor is it to be naive about Munich. Hitler could and should have been stopped. Under both League and UN principles, while it would have been illegal to invade Germany in the mid-30s to do regime change, it would have been quite ok to confront the fascists once they started attacking the neighbors. WWII could have been avoided by the international use of force, and that is the right lesson of Munich. Forceful intervention for collective security was justified, and the problem was

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precisely the unwillingness of great powers (especially the US) to do so. Indeed, current American willingness to be engaged rather than isolated from global problems is a welcome change (that Woodrow Wilson, for one, would have been happy to see, albeit in less "*pax Americana*" forms — he who set up the League in Geneva only to see the US stay out, and whose name lingers still in that old building by Lake Geneva called the Palais Wilson). Munich does justify the pre-emptive use of collective force against clear threats to peace, but not the unilateral use of war for regime change. The problem with the League is not that it did not invade Germany, but that it did not stop Germany invading. And despite what happened in Rwanda, the world is a better place with today's UN, partly because the great powers are indeed more willing to intervene in crisis spots in the name of peace and human rights. America's global activism may have an imperial agenda, but on balance it is better than the old isolationism, which doomed the world to a terrible war with thugs who could have been stopped earlier by police action. So, yes, there is a need for the global police, and if that includes the US Marines, all the better. But that is different from just taking the law into one's own hands. A "tough liberalism" is needed that will stand up to global terrorism, but not one that is just reducible to US imperialism and that rides roughshod over the UN.

Nor should "bad" regimes, though not attacking other states, be appeased. Even if not invaded, they can be challenged, opposed, contained, and undermined in any way possible, in the name of basic human rights. That is what happened with apartheid. Short of actually invading South Africa, just about everything else was done. And that is no accident. The world did learn important lessons from the Holocaust, and that is why the UN differs from the League. It gave itself not just one, but two mandates: not just to keep the peace, but also to promote human rights. The anti-apartheid movement symbolized this new global commitment to universal rights (something which cynics who dismiss human rights seem to have forgotten), and abusive regimes today face far more pressures for justice than ever before.

So misgivings about illegitimate war do not mean indifference to the struggle for justice. But this struggle can take many legitimate forms. Bad regimes can be sanctioned, rather than appeased, and they also risk imploding from internal forces of change that can be externally supported in various ways. The biggest threat to rogue states and fundamentalist regimes is not the US Marines, but Madonna videos. Who is one of the most banned authors in Teheran today? Karl Marx? Adam Smith? No, Jane Austen. Western values, about personal liberty, democracy, rights for women, consumer choice, cultural freedom and so on, are now popular and subversive enough that illegitimate invasions are not as necessary as hard-liners claim, and may just make matters worse by fuelling anti-Western rage. Carrots and sticks, globalization and incentives, containment and sanctions, external pressure, internal implosion: these can be effective alternatives to invasion. That was true about communism, it was true about apartheid, and it is no less true now.

With North Korea, for example, the best solution is to just take the phone off the hook, stop sending food, and wait for implosion (and the application to join

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the WTO). The idea that this Stalinist basket-case is a threat to world peace that requires some massive Star Wars defense is absurd. If anything, it is the other way around: that idea empowers the regime and its extortionist temper tantrums. And the Iranian mullahs are going to find that young people are a force to be reckoned with, and that the lid cannot be kept on things in today's globalizing world. If Lady Catherine De Bourgh learns, a few centuries ago (in that heated exchange at the end of "Pride and Prejudice") that she cannot tell Miss Bennet to get lost, just imagine what the mullahs now face, in the 21st century, as they tell teenagers to turn off the music and get medieval.

Sooner or later what such regimes really want is to get global and yes, join the WTO. And one should not forget Vietnam, because that is how the Vietnam war finally ends, not with a bang but a whimper, tucked away on page 36 of the paper, and noticed by no one: the WTO application. Did so many have to die, on both sides, so that at the end of the day Vietnam could join the club of global development? Perhaps everyone should have just stayed home, like those Swiss peasants in the Alps, who said sorry, we cannot make it to the 30 Years War, the Battle of the Somme, or any other such "glorious" events.[2] Who knows, perhaps those GIs from the corn fields of Kansas who are now in Iraq facing that taboo called guerrilla war (and those Reservists who signed up for health plans, but got six months in the desert instead) may start missing home too. Hopefully for them, they will not be scrambling for the last helicopter out of Saigon.

Of course, the way things end, with communism, apartheid, Vietnam, cannot be predicted in advance, but can still teach some lessons. By all means, get tough with bad regimes, but one does not have to invade them to do that. Invasion raises questions of legitimacy that do not go away just because one wins a war, quite apart from the fact that, as in Vietnam, it may help one lose it. The Americans lost, not just because of their misguided technocratic belief in a military solution to an internal political problem (of anti-colonial nationalism), but also because of the conviction of many (and not just in the US) that this was a bad war. And as Iraq shows, that official belief in military solutions, and that countervailing concern about the justice of war (and the quagmire of a "bad war"), are still very much around.

But if the Mussolini fallacy does not settle the argument, neither does anything else. Of course, there are no absolute solutions to such debate, and in the end one has to make situational judgments as to where the balance of truth and justice lies, and what trade-offs between conflicting principles make sense. Few people would now lament the end of the old regime. Yet, this is no time for triumphalism. War is a very blunt instrument, and the critics were right to want more convincing grounds, and UN approval, for its legitimate use. Yes, some good things have come about, and perhaps the trains will run on time. But the means used may haunt the world, as seeds of rage bear fruit, and might-is-right is taken up by all.

2. For a fuller discussion, see Rick Johnstone, "Ethnic Purges and Neighborly Pacts: Reflections on a Swiss Statue," in *Telos* 115 (Spring 1999), pp. 148-150.

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Regime Change, or Smash the State: Reply to Johnstone

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Johnstone's critique of American policy leading to the Second Iraq War is built on two key premises: first, that the sole *bona fide* rationale for the war was the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, i.e., regime change, and second, that the goal of regime change does not in principle morally warrant the use of military power. On both points, however, Johnstone's claims turn out to be untenable. This is evident in terms of his reconstruction of the history leading up to the war as well as with regard to the character of the political categories he brings to bear on the discussion. Nonetheless, his overall argument does exemplify the poverty of current liberal thinking, just as it misses the key points in international affairs to which a contemporary critical theory might be able to respond.

Johnstone begins by claiming that two of the public justifications for the war — weapons of mass destruction and terrorist connections — have turned out to be "bogus," leaving only the goal of regime change as an operative rationale for the war. In his view, therefore, the war was fought exclusively for regime change. This account misrepresents the historical record, while also treating the matters at stake in the narrowest of ways. In the period leading up to the war, all three arguments for war were made frequently, although the more the Bush administration acceded to pressure (from the State Department bureaucracy and elsewhere) to go through the UN, the more the focus shifted to the single issue which alone would have currency at the UN: weapons, which — a legacy of the First Iraqi War — Iraq was prohibited from possessing. In other words, the tendency to exclude from discussion human rights abuses by the Iraqi regime as well as terrorist connections was a direct result of the extreme tunnel vision and legalism characteristic of the UN. The exclusion of the character of the regime from UN discussion is, of course, a result of the nature of the UN itself and at the root of its incorrigible institutional hypocrisy. While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is, in effect, a foundational document for the UN, there is no effort made to make membership in the UN contingent on the character of human rights in a member country. Why would the UN oppose Iraq on the basis of its mistreatment of its population, when such standards are never used in evaluating any of the other dozens of corrupt regimes that honor the General Assembly with the presence of their distinguished representatives? Indeed a good record on human rights issues is not even a criterion for membership in the UN's own human rights oversight bodies. (A similar argument could be

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made regarding the other argument for war, the alleged support for terrorist groups: members of the UN had a vested interest in keeping this point off the table, due to their own records, including European Union support for Hamas).

To his credit, Johnstone understands how miserable Saddam's regime in fact was, even if the UN had no basis of making such a judgment. Now that it has fallen, it has become common for opponents of the war to concede that Saddam was not a very savory fellow after all (even though they opposed changing his regime). It is important to remember, however, that prior to the war, the Left articulated absolutely no criticism of Saddam. Indeed, in the long decade between the two Iraq Wars, the only position put forward by the left was one condemning US-led sanctions (rather than, say, Saddam's repression or his palace-building projects, in the face of enormous domestic poverty and a massive housing shortage). For all the mass demonstrations against the US efforts that toppled Saddam, it is difficult to recall a single instance where the Western Left or liberals demonstrated against the domestic brutality of Ba'athist Iraq. In general, whenever the US has taken on oppressive or genocidal regimes in recent years — Serbia, Afghanistan, Iraq — there is hardly any record of any liberal or Left concern with the prior repressive character of those regimes, but only considerable evidence of resistance to bringing force to bear to change them. At a certain point, the consistent opposition to the use of force against genocidal regimes has to be seen for what it is: a fellow-travelling support for that same genocide.

Is it, however, the case that the other two arguments, weapons and terrorism, were bogus? Johnstone's claims notwithstanding, both arguments in fact retain considerable credibility. The jury is still out on the ongoing weapons search in Iraq; in the meantime, Wolfowitz and other members of the administration may be engaging in some political efforts to lower expectations with regard to what sorts of weapons evidence might yet be founded. Leaving aside speculations on what might still be dug up out of holes in the deserts of Iraq, one can nevertheless identify several important weapons-related aspects of the war (which means that Johnstone's argument that it was all always and only about regime change is wrong).

No one doubts that, at points in the past, Saddam possessed some weapons of mass destruction, that he was prepared to use chemical weapons, that he launched SCUD missiles against distant sites in non-belligerent countries, and that he had vigorously pursued expanding his arsenal to include nuclear weapons. There is no doubt that he unleashed a reign of terror in occupied Kuwait and that he caused untold millions of deaths in the Iran-Iraq war. There is also no doubt that he did not produce evidence or documentation of a full destruction of his chemical weapons, as he was obligated to do pursuant to the defeat in the First Iraq War. Meanwhile, he maintained an aggressive and hostile posture toward the US.

Whether Europeans and liberals understand it or not, US policy and US public perception were changed significantly by September 11. The experience of vulnerability lowered the threshold for security concerns. In this case, it means

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that the perception of a growing threat could trigger a US response more quickly. Indeed, the willingness to act against a potential threat in Iraq was already evidenced even in the Clinton administration's 1998 bombings, although with characteristic inconsistency and without follow-through.

The most important results, however, as far as the weapons question is concerned, have been the ripple effect: Iran and, following quickly, Libya have succumbed to international pressure either to submit to full inspections in one case (what Saddam had always resisted) or to dismantle arms programs altogether in the other case. Indeed the Libyan programs were more advanced than international "experts" had imagined. Liberal pundits have claimed that these two cases show the effectiveness of negotiation: on the contrary, they show that the deplored by liberals regime change in Baghdad has put the fear of God in some of the other authoritarian regimes in the region, and which therefore now show some willingness to cooperate with the international community. We do not know yet what might still be found in Iraq (or hidden in Syria), but in the meantime a major success of Iraqi Freedom has involved limitations on weaponry in Iran and Libya. One might call this a domino effect.

The second argument that Johnstone considers "bogus" involves the terrorist connection. If Johnstone insists that the terrorism argument can only hold if conclusive evidence were found showing that Saddam Hussein personally financed 9/11, we may still have to wait a while. Nonetheless, we are quite far from having no evidence at all, even if it has not reached the level that is typically required within the business-as-usual bureaucracy of the intelligence establishment at the State Department. This is not the place to go into the details of the evidence and memos that have made their way through the press in recent months, pointing to connections between Iraq and international terrorism. Suffice it to say that there was considerable "noise" regarding links between Iraq and terrorist groups. Again, in the post 9/11 context, the threshold for action has been lowered, and the Bush administration correctly took that noise very seriously. For the anti-war camp, however, that vigilance amounted to an improper intervention into the intelligence bureaucracy.

In fact, it is on the liberal side of the argument where evidence regarding links between Iraq and terrorism is egregiously manipulated. When opponents of the war claim that the terrorist connection is bogus in order to whitewash Saddam, they are obviously prepared to discount the undisputed financial support that Saddam provided for the terrorism campaign in Israel, including cash awards for families of homicide bombers who killed Israeli Jews and Arabs. That terrorist connection evidently does not count: some corpses are more equal than others. These same opponents of US policy in Iraq complained for a decade that US-led sanctions were killing Iraqi children; now it has become clear that that was all just a well-orchestrated propaganda campaign which relied on Western dupes. Saddam had been able, thanks to UN management, to transform the food-for-oil program into a palaces-for-oil program, while paying off supporters in the Arab world and in the West.

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Terrorism, just as the weapons question, should be viewed in an international, not only in an Iraqi framework. With the fall of Iraq, even Syria has begun to display greater reluctance in the support of terrorist groups, although it still has a long way to go. The complicity of Arab states in support for non-state terrorism is by no means over, but the fall of Iraq may yet emerge as the crucial turning point in a long-term process. It is increasingly clear that the threats of terrorism that have emerged from the Arab world, combining both religious fundamentalism and secular pan-Arabism, have thrived in a region dominated by authoritarian states and failed economies. The war on terrorism will not succeed until a modicum of reform takes root throughout the region. In other words, the argument for the war regarding terrorism is not (only) about some smoking gun linking Saddam and Bin Laden, but rather about how the terrorist threat can only be ended by addressing its causes through a transformation of the political-economic structure of the whole region, beginning with regime change in Iraq.

Therefore, Johnstone's premise that two arguments — weapons and terrorism — have lost their validity is simply wrong. Moreover, the prominence of the third argument, regime-change, far from indicating a retreat, is a positive development: part of the establishment of international norms of behavior regarding the governmental treatment of domestic populations. It is odd to find the liberal community in the US so hostile to arguments based on the *desideratum* of human rights.

Means and Ends

Although the multiple justifications for the war are still quite valid, in Johnstone's account, the genuine and sole goal of the war was regime change; yet, this desirable goal — so he claims — should not have been pursued through military action. This is the sense of his strained phrase of a "Mussolini fallacy." Presumably he means to say that Mussolini did in fact "make the trains run on time" — a good and noble end — but the dictator achieved it through the vehicle of fascist violence, surely an undesirable means. Leaving aside any substantive discussions of Mussolini and fascism, Johnstone's analogy boils down to the following: the good end of removing Saddam from power, alas, did not justify the utilization of the imperfect means of an illegitimate war.

It is not clear that Johnstone poses the means-ends question in the best way. Alternatively, one might well ask about the conduct of the war and post-war administration. How do these "means" relate to the "ends"? While anti-war activists, in Europe and particularly in Germany, continue to imagine the US conduct of war in Iraq as identical to the very different conduct of war in Vietnam and — something quite different again — identical to the carpet bombings of German cities in WWII, none of this is very useful for a genuine evaluation of what transpired in the victorious campaign. On the contrary, it appears that due to advances in weapons technology ("smart bombs") and a policy change regarding military tactics (Rumsfeld doctrine), the war was in fact conducted with low levels of

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destruction and collateral damage, just as the post-war presence in Iraq, in relation to the size of the Iraqi population, is much lower on a per capita basis than was the case in post-1945 Germany. The war was not about the massive use of force, particularly when compared with other military campaigns, including the first Iraq War. The military means utilized appear to have been much more constrained in order to be consistent with the end of regime liberation and democratization than the anti-war critics imagine.

Johnstone, in fact, seems to waffle on the issue of regime change. At times, he suggests that attacks on a sovereign state for domestic reasons are never warranted. Yet his larger point seems to be that attacks on a state with the goal of regime change could be warranted and legitimate, if only they had been blessed by the UN. He writes: "Munich does justify the pre-emptive use of collective force against clear threats to peace, but not the unilateral use of war for regime change." Thus, for Johnstone, the sovereignty of a state can be infringed, if that state presents a clear threat to the peace and if the infringement is "collective." That Iraq had threatened the peace (wars against Iran and Kuwait) is clear; that it had a history of developing weapons systems is clear; and that it was in violation of numerous UN resolutions pertaining to weapons inspections was equally certain. There were grounds enough to assume that the regime would continue to threaten the peace. Johnstone sets the criterion as a "clear threat," but a "threat" is an indication of a potential action, which might be carried out in the future; a response to a threat is then necessarily preemptive.

The crux of the matter, therefore, is not the rationale, i.e., the threat, but the process: the infringement of Iraqi sovereignty would have met Johnstone's standards if it had only been "collective." As elsewhere, alternative readings of the history are possible. As much as the war in Iraq was led by the US, it was by no means a solely US operation; England is not a negligible ally, and numerous other countries have participated at lesser levels. The United States obviously provided the leadership, but it has not acted alone. Why then does this coalition not meet the standard of "collective" or multilateral action? There are two overlapping reasons for this: the UN did not provide ultimate approval, and France opposed the war. Indeed, the UN did not approve, because of French opposition; the lack of a multilateral authorization through the UN was clearly not a consequence of the issues at hand, but an artifact of French foreign policy.

The expectation that the war be approved by the UN is not necessarily wrong in principle (or rather, that is a separate matter requiring a consideration of the relationship between national interest, democratic will formation, and international bureaucratic structures). The requirement of UN approval is, however problematic in practice, to the extent that the moral authority of the UN is already so shaky and hardly credible. The UN had not taken its own resolutions seriously for years. It had participated in the corruption of the food-for-oil program (for which no complete public audit has been conducted). It is well-known that the

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UN bureaucracy is both inefficient and sharply anti-American. Most important for Johnstone's argument, though, is the fact that France, leading Germany and Russia in its wake, misused the processes of the UN specifically in order to thwart American policy. By manipulating the instrument of "collective" international security discussions, France damaged the institution and basically removed it from service. In the absence of an effectively operating institution that might provide collective approval of action against a threat, the restraint on any individual nation — or coalition of nations, as in this case — from taking action against a threat is greatly reduced. If there was an abuse of means-ends rationale in this whole episode, it was therefore surely the French instrumentalization of the UN as a vehicle with which it could pursue its nationalist policy of a "multipolar" world against the US. In the meantime, the US administration — in part eagerly, in part reluctantly — went to the UN repeatedly in search of support. Moreover, the US appeals for UN support were grounded in arguments to uphold UN resolutions and to save the institution from irrelevance in international matters.

There is something disturbingly formalistic in Johnstone's argument that distinguishes between the denounced means, the attack on a sovereign state, and the plausible ends, regime change in the interest of a better life. It amounts to a recognition of the deeply unfortunate character of the regime — genocide, torture, international threat, personal enrichment of the ruler, etc. — while claiming that it is immoral to use force to bring it to an end. Obviously, one would not argue for an attack on a sovereign state in the interest of, say, reforming health care or the welfare system, no matter how that might promise to improve the quality of life of its citizens, at least as judged by an outsider. That, however, is not at all what was stake in Iraq: a cruel police state and a repeated threat to other countries. Nonetheless, for Johnstone and opponents of the war, these concerns are, ultimately, not pertinent and do not justify robust action. This implies that Johnstone's ultimate good is preserving the sovereign, i.e., the sovereignty of an established state, rather than the quality of life of the people. In this view, the first rule of international order is to maintain the states that exist, regardless of their character.

It is this statism — defending an existing state simply because it exists — which is the ultimate criterion for liberalism: better state power, no matter how evil, than free individuals, no matter how worthy. Indeed, the *de facto* loyalty to the regime in Baghdad (the direct consequence of opposing regime change) was linked to a defense of expansive state structures everywhere. There is no doubt that a large part of the ire that fuelled the anti-war demonstrations on both sides of the Atlantic involved the assumption that the Bush administration — its Iraq policy aside — stood in the tradition of free-markets and deregulation, anathema to American liberals and European leftists. The rallying cries against "regime change" were, at least to some extent, simultaneously about resisting changes in existing welfare states. Demonstrations against Bush were always implicitly also demonstrations against Reagan and Thatcher, the anti-statists, the regime-changers *par excellence*.

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The theoretical issue at stake in the debate over the Iraq War is therefore not Johnstone's means-ends problematic, but rather the standing of the "state" altogether in the contemporary world. Johnstone operates with assumptions that state sovereignty, his ultimate good, and international organizations are stable structures with clearly defined standings. This is hardly the case in the post-Cold War world and in the context of deregulation and globalization. It follows that a reexamination of the category of the state is necessary for the current political debate over Iraq and for larger political-theoretical concerns as well.

First, one must ask in what sense Saddam's regime in Iraq was a state at all. Obviously, Iraq's territorial integrity was a colonial invention after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, so there is no particularly legitimist rationale for treating this unit as an inviolable state. The same argument is made regularly (and on the Left) with regard to the colonial legacy in the African state system. This observation is, however, only a starting point; a political discussion would necessarily follow regarding the advantages and disadvantages of preserving the territory of Iraq as a unified state. Still it is unclear why Johnstone and others treat the Iraqi state with such sanctity when its borders are only imperialist legacies.

In addition, and aside from the question of territorial integrity, the very nature of the Ba'athist regime raises questions pertinent to the question of the state. It was obviously never a product of democratic legitimation processes, nor did it meet the standards of a traditional monarchy with dynastic claims. While Johnstone focuses on the legitimacy of the war, it is rather the legitimacy of Saddam's rule that is questionable. Undemocratic and non-traditional, and therefore not obviously legitimate in standard understandings of the term, Saddam's regime was — to make matters worse for any claims regarding its legitimacy — also very much about organized terror carried out to a large extent through networks based on tribal loyalty and kinship. Although marked by some particular Iraqi local color, Saddam's rule resembled the model of the totalitarianism, described by Arendt, insofar as the operation of previously existing state power slipped away from the rule of law or even mere bureaucratic management and degenerated into random and universal violence. Iraq was a degraded state, increasingly comparable to an organized network of gangs of thugs. Surely, state legitimacy means applies to something more than to a gang of criminals with the key to the arsenal and is willing to be most brutal in its torture chambers. When does a state cease to fulfill the purposes of a state and therefore fall outside of any international order?

While a state might be construed as having the monopoly on violence within a particular territory, that does not mean that any given violent organization is necessarily a state: this is the question posed by Saddam's Iraq. Yet parallel questions can be raised about the UN, and not only because of its inability to wield force effectively. The problematic character of the UN is much broader and rooted in its history, as well as the changed historical circumstances. In the decades following WWII, the UN probably served some useful purposes by providing a diplomatic

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venue throughout the Cold War. However, with the collapse of the USSR and the US emergence of the single superpower, dwarfing other countries not only in military strength, but also in the size of the economy, the standing of the UN has become unclear. It certainly is no longer useful as a buffer zone between superpowers and, idealistic rhetoric notwithstanding, it has clearly lost any sense of mission. This identity confusion at the UN is evidenced in the constant and fruitless discussions regarding the reform of its governance structures.

It is unrealistic to assume that the one superpower will just be one member among many in the UN, or even on the Security Council. This imbalance results from the economic and military differentials, but also from the 9/11 effect: the US is hardly about to submit its strategy for national security to the UN for approval. Indeed, the UN has not taken itself seriously for too long to expect the US to subordinate to it. Johnstone's arguments in support of the UN reflect, ultimately, an understanding of the 20th century in terms of the need for greater international cooperation, as if cooperation among states, regardless of their character, were the ultimate good. Yet cooperation among states means the preservation of all states, henceforth to be shielded from criticism or pressures for change. This ideology of multilateralism is particularly popular in "old Europe," where the modern history of world wars is interpreted retroactively as a consequence of multiple nationalisms gone wild: hence, the UN (or the EU) as a vehicle to tame those nationalisms. WWII broke out, in this logic, because Germany and France did not "cooperate" enough. The predominant American worldview is quite different: it was not lack of cooperation that caused the war, but the excess of misplaced cooperation inherent in (European) policies of appeasement. There is a point where cooperation turns into complicity and collaboration. The alternative to appeasement is the willingness to use force to confront tyrants. This is the lesson drawn from the world wars and from the Cold War as well. (If it had been up to the UN and the Western Europeans, the Communist Party would still be in power in Moscow, cooperating at some times, and engaging in international adventures at others, while maintaining its repressive domestic structures ruthlessly). Within the US domestic discussion, there is no longer an effective middle in the foreign policy discussion, no centrist liberalism: either support for the deployment of American power in the war on terrorism and for democratization or support for a retreat from international responsibility.

What remains to be sorted out, however, is the political-theoretical nature of the democratization plans inherent in Bush's foreign policy. It is clear from the speeches at the National Endowment for Democracy and in Whitehall that the agenda is bold indeed. After the defeat of the Communist world 15 years ago, something like the reform of the Arab world is now envisioned. There is no doubt that Bush presents this goal with a spirited and idealistic message: freedom for humanity as heaven's plan, in nearly Hegelian overtones. For the Left, this democratization policy is really only American imperialism, although in fact it

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may simply be American military power that is the vehicle of democracy: what are the political and theoretical ramifications of the Wilsonian legacy ending up in the hands of the Republican Party? Neoconservatives might see this process quite similarly, but (unlike the Left) only in order to applaud it: after the liberalization of Eastern Europe and Latin America, the Arab World represents the next big task in the expansion of freedom. To be sure, one can also wonder whether there is not, beneath this optimistic rhetoric, a more realistic agenda: democratization not primarily for the sake of democracy (or "heaven's" plan), but out of the recognition that US security interests are better served by a system of democratic states than by authoritarian regimes that breed terror. The practical difference between such realism, grounded in national interest, and a neo-Wilsonian idealism may be small at first, but the motivations are quite distinct and, in the end, the implications for US political culture are very different. In the meantime, Johnstone seems to be defending an abandoned post. He wants to hold onto the legacy of internationalist and Wilsonian idealism, but he hates the fact that the Bush administration may be leading the way. It turns out to be impossible for the Left to maintain a substantive commitment to democracy and internationalism, while also succumbing perpetually to isolationist temptations.

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The Katechon *and the Future of Latin America*[1]

Alberto Buela

The Greek word *katechon* means to restrain, to hold back, or to prevent. In his second letter to the Thessalonians,[2] the Apostle Paul employed this concept against the coming of the Antichrist. Twenty centuries later, Carl Schmitt adopted the same concept, but gave it a political meaning. Before the Second Coming, two events must occur: the great universal apostasy, and the coming of the "man of sin," i.e., the Antichrist.[3] There had been some unrest among the Thessalonians as a result of believing that the Second Coming was imminent. This was partly due to the misunderstandings described in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians,[4] and partly to the manipulations of imposters. Paul wrote his second letter to the Thessalonians to

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1. Translated from Spanish by Montserrat Soler.

2. See *The Holy Bible*, Containing the Old and New Testaments: Authorized Version, ed. by Rev. C. I. Scofield (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), II Thessalonians 2:6-7, p. 1272.

3. See II John: 7, in *ibid.*, p. 1326. In order to determine these events more precisely, Paul contextualized the doctrine of the *katechon* for Christian believers in Thessalonica: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him. That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will *let*, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked [one] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." See II Thessalonians, 2: 1-12, in *ibid.*, pp. 1271-72.

4. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ will rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." I Thessalonians 4: 15-17, in *ibid.*, p. 1269.

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clarify the matter, in the course of which he introduced his doctrine of the *katechon* as a complement to his apocalyptic vision. In II Thessalonians 2:6-7, Paul refers to two types of *katechon*. In verse 6, he uses the neutral pronoun *to* (it), and in verse 7, he uses the masculine pronoun *ho* (he). In two continuous and subsequent verses, he uses both the personal and the impersonal pronouns to refer to the same obstacle. There has been much speculation as to what the *katechon* actually refers. For most Latin authors and their translators, it is the Roman Empire with its laws and institutions. Along with most of the Church forefathers, St. Augustine shares this view. For St. Thomas, it is also the Roman Empire, even after its fall. The tie to Rome was due to the continuity of its ancient location in space: eternal Rome, the union of *imperium* [empire] and *sacerdotium* [priesthood].

After the 17th century, Protestant theologians read Paul as referring to Roman emperors: Caligula, Titus, Nero, and Claudius. B. B. Warfield theorizes that "the power that restrains" is the continuation of the Jewish State, after the Judaic apostasy, and Christianity was persecuted by Roman emperors. James of Jerusalem personifies this *katechon*.[5] Other theologians such as Frame, Best, Grimm, and Sinar[6] see the *katechon* as none other than Satan, whose influence is already in the world as the mystery of iniquity. A totally opposite account was developed by Strobel Trilling, whereby the *katechon* is God, in the person of the Holy Spirit. Last, but not least, there is a tradition, of which O. Cullman is the main representative, that believes the *katechon* to be the Christian missionaries' proclamation of the Gospel to all the nations, including Israel.[7]

Given all these conflicting accounts of the *katechon*, it is difficult to draw any definitive conclusions. However, the account that has the greatest theological depth is the one which maintains that the *katechon* is God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, who allows the Antichrist to appear after preaching the Gospel to all nations.[8] According to the Apostate Paul, the Antichrist who will sit on St. Peter's throne and will perform wonders is called *anomos*: "one without law."

Schmitt introduced the concept of the *katechon* in an essay on Tocqueville,[9] used it in *Political Theology II*, and developed it further in his last major

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5. B.B. Warfield, *The Formation of the Canon of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union, 1892).

6. See *Catholic Encyclopedia*, on the internet, term *apocalypsis*.

7. Aniso Renato de Andrade, *Quem detem o Anticristo?* Seminario Batista do Estado de Minas Gerais (Brazil: 1996).

8. According to Dollinger: "The Antichrist will not be a demon, as some believed; neither will it be the Devil embodied in the Antichrist's human nature. If one follows Genesis 49:17, and considers it along with the omission of Daniel from the catalog of tribes found in the Apocalypse, he will be a human being, perhaps of Jewish extraction." See *Catholic Encyclopedia*, on the internet, term *katechon*.

9. Carl Schmitt, "Historiographia in Nuce: Alexis de Tocqueville (August 1946)," in Carl Schmitt, *Ex Captivitate Salus: Erfahrungen der Zeit 1945/47* (Cologne: Greven Verlag, 1950), p. 31

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work.[10] Since, for Schmitt, all modern political concepts are secularized theological concepts, he emphasized that from the time of the Roman Empire and throughout the Christian Middle Ages the *katechon* has been decisive in restraining the advancement of evil. It has been transmitted by means of Roman law and the *nomos* of the earth embodied in the *jus publicum Europaeum*, of which Schmitt considered himself to be the last representative. He even regarded himself as a *katechon*.

For Schmitt, the concept of the *katechon* has a plurality of meanings.[11] He emphasizes that the continuity "that bound medieval international law to the Roman Empire was found not in norms and general ideas, but in the concrete orientation to Rome. This Christian empire was not eternal. It always had its own end and that of the present eon in view. Nevertheless, it was capable of being a historical power. The decisive historical concept of this continuity was that of the restrainer: *katechon*. 'Empire' in this sense meant the historical power to *restrain* the appearance of the Antichrist and the end of the present eon."[12] He reiterated this understanding of "empire" after WWII at a conference in Madrid: "According to the doctrine of the Apostle Paul, given that the man of power restrains evil and the Antichrist, he therefore also retards the start of the final catastrophe. Paul's doctrine is consistent with the Greek word *katechon*, which means that the whole world of medieval Christian history and its idea of the Empire is based of the conviction that the Empire is a Christian principle that is precisely the same as the '*katechon*.' Great medieval emperors like Otto the Great and Frederick Barbarosa saw the historical essence of their imperial dignity in their quality as '*katechon*,' whereby they struggled against the Antichrist and his allies, and thereby delayed the end of time."[13]

All of this shows that Schmitt based his theory of the *katechon* on *nomos* [order] as an obstacle to evil, by which he meant disorder. Since without *arcana*,[14]

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10. Carl Schmitt, *Politische Theologie II: Die Legende von der Erledigung jeder Politischen Theologie* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1970), p. 81. He also mentions the Antichrist on pp. 46 and 93. See also Carl Schmitt, *The* Nomos *of the Earth in the International Law of the* Jus Publicum Europaeum, tr. and annotated by G. L. Ulmen (New York: Telos Press, 2003), pp. 59f., 87, and 238.

11. Thus, he describes it as follows: "The East Roman, Byzantine empire, which ruled from Constantinople, was a coastal empire. It had at its disposal a powerful fleet, and possessed a secret weapon: the so-called Greek fire. Yet, it was reduced to a completely defensive position. Nevertheless, it was able to achieve something that the empire of Charles the Great — a purely land power — was unable to achieve; it was a true 'restrainer,' a *katechon*, as it is called in Greek. Despite its weakness, for many centuries it 'held back' Islam, and thereby prevented the Arabs from conquering all of Italy. Had it not been so, just as in North Africa, where every trace of Christian culture was destroyed, all of Italy would have been incorporated into the Islamic world. See Carl Schmitt, *Land und Meer: Eine weltgeschichtliche Betrachtung* [1944] (Cologne-Lövenich: "Hohenheim" Verlag, 1981), p. 19.

12. Schmitt, *The* Nomos *of the Earth*, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.

13. Carl Schmitt, *La Unidad del Mundo* (Madrid: Ateneo, 1951), pp. 34-35.

14. Schmitt, *The* Nomos *of the Earth*, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

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i.e., secrets, "there can be no great politics," one of the main functions of the *katechon* is to keep itself secret. Without it, the only recourse is "Caesarism," i.e., a non-Christian form of power lacking a legitimate crown, a legitimate rule, and a legitimate mission. According to Schmitt, this happened when the Jews rejected Jesus Christ just prior to the clarification by claiming that they had "no king but Caesar."[15]

Metapolitics is the study of the main categories that determine political action.[16] Thus, metapolitics cannot exist without politics. It not only forces thinking about political change, but also about how to implement it or, as Max Scheler put it, "to supplant government leaders and supporters of the present situation."[17] Today, the present situation is defined by globalization understood as "one world," as announced by President Bush senior in 1991. Taking into account the Apostle Paul's enigma regarding the personal and the impersonal *katechon*, and Schmitt's concept of *Großraum* (a large spacial political entity), the political change to be sought today is the construction of *Großräume* in general, and of a South American *Großraum* in particular, to function as a *katechon* against the "fundamentalist vision of globalization according to which this is the only possible world," and Bush's project of a single government dominating the world. It would be a *Großraum*, not a single state, because the age of the nation-state has ended, even in countries such as Russia, China, India, and Brazil.[18] Today, the action of an isolated state is irrelevant to the worldwide government of the Group of 8 as the executive power, the International Monetary Fund as the managerial-financial power, or Davos as the deliberative power.

The metapolitical sense of the *katechon* can be seen in a *Großraum*, but not just any *Großraum* — only one built on *arcana*, because secrets are necessary for the realization of a great policy. As Heidegger put it, what is great is born great, and a great South American *Großraum* must come into being great. It will begin as an alliance between Brazil and Argentina — the two giants — and continue until it includes all of Latin America. South America already has a common language, a common economic and cultural history of exploitation and colonization, and a common enemy: Anglo-Saxons (Englishmen in the 19th century, Yankees in the 20th century).[19] In addition, Latin America shares a common religion (orthodox Christianity) and genuine political institutions beyond liberal democracy, such

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15. St. John 19:15, in *The Holy Bible*, *op. cit.*, p. 1142.

16. Cf. Alberto Buela, *Ensayos de disenso* (Barcelona: Nueva Republica, 1999), pp. 93 and 98.

17. Max Scheler, "Marx: El hombre en la etapa de la rivelación," in *Metafisica de la libertad* (Buenas Aires: Nova, 1960), p. 189.

18. Helio Jaguribe, *Argentina y Brazil en la globalización* (Buenas Aires: FCE, 1999), p. 39

19. Horacio Cagni writes: "According to Carl Schmitt, the idea of *Großraum* is based on the friend-enemy antithesis. The enemy determines the *Großraum*." See *Escritos de politica mundial de Carl Schmitt* (Buenos Aires: Heraclés, 1995), p. 24.

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as the figure of the leader [*caudillo*] and his representation "by acclamation" [*por acclamatio*]. Today, it has a population of 330 million, and technological complementarity among its ten nation-states that seems to have come about by chance, and all this located in the common space twice the size of Europe or the US.

The second metapolitical sense of the *katechon* is the fact that South America is part of the greater cultural space of Latin America, including all the peoples from the Rio Grande to Tierra del Fuego. This space has a peculiar eschatological destiny embodied in the solar splendor of The Lady of Guadalupe.[20] This will probably be the secret of the great political event that will occur, and this new *katechon* will be the Latin Americans' America.

The third metapolitical sense of the *katechon* is proposed in the struggle for a determined territorial space, as well as its conservation and the defense of what Virgil called *genius loci*, i.e., the soil, the climate, and the landscape. Today, the mystery of iniquity is the idolatry of the monotheism of the "free market," which generates individualism and social nihilism. What restrains this — the *katechon* — is the cultural, ethical, and spiritual resistance pursued by individuals, groups, and peoples who seek to maintain their identity in the midst of neo-liberal globalization. The difficulty lies in knowing who restrains this phenomenon, and here one can rely on the poet, who knows paths the philosopher does not: "It would be necessary to be Roosevelt, God, the Terrible Gunman, and the Strong Hunter to be able to hold us in thy steely claws. And then, having everything, one thing is missing: God."[21]

The answer here is the concrete *katechon*, i.e., a new South American strategy. The third millennium begins in South America with tangled power relations: nation-states without any power; political, social, cultural, and religious leaders without a purpose or sense of belonging; and economic models excluding most people. Out of a population of about 326 million, almost 40% is poor and miserable; only about 10% have buying power. How long can South America support the worsening contradictions of a political system without any representation or legitimacy, driven by the whims of partisan oligarchies? How long can an economic model that starves its people remain viable? How long will people stand such injustice? All these questions and others will not find answers until a sovereign power is created (or recreated) that decides to do the opposite of what has been done so far. From the viewpoint of an international strategy, South America must propose a sovereign power different from the one imposed on it.

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20. As Primo Siena wrote, "it is the first time, in the entire millenarian course of the Marian theophanies, that the image of Our Lady has appeared pregnant, as she was in the hidden journey to Bethlehem narrated by the Gospels or as foreseen by the favorite disciple in the marvelous solar scene. There is a correspondence since 1600 between Our Lady of Guadalupe and the 'Woman dressed in the Sun' of the prophetic text." See Primo Siena, "La Virgin morena y el destino escatológico americano," in *Disenso* 10 (1997).

21. Rubén Darío, *Poema a Roosevelt en Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1905).

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After Columbus discovered America, the Spaniards conquered and colonized South America following a double strategy: the Andean strategy used by the Incas; and the maritime strategy adopted by the Portuguese and the Jesuits in the conquest of the great forest and coastal spaces. These two strategies are the first antecedent to what is now called the Andean Pact and Mercosur.[22] Since independence, the historical strategy of South America has been handled through lines of tension that sought to promote or to prevent the direct use of both oceans. Thus, Brazil has two mother lines, one to Santiago and the other to Bogota. Argentina has one to Lima, and from there to Caracas, which interferes with the Brazilian lines. For its part, Chile, with its mother line to Quito and from there to San José, crosses in its development with those from Brazil and Argentina.

Uruguay and Paraguay do not really count here, because they have always thrived in the midst of Argentinean-Brazilian conflicts. Their attitudes have been neither praiseworthy nor morally acceptable. Political relations are not between good and bad, but between friends and enemies. After the Pacific War, Bolivia became a landbound state that depends on the Argentinean Sea (through Bermejo) and Peru (Puerto de Ilo) for access to the Pacific. In Juan Bautista Alberdi's words, it is "an impossible state" subsidized by Argentina. Peru has had a privileged tie with Argentina since the beginning of its history, but its relative weight in the region is marginal. The same is true for Equador, but its tie is with Chile. As for Colombia, it has access to two oceans, but since the assassination of the popular leader Eliécier Gaitán in 1948 it has been politically divided between liberals and conservatives, who have exercised power ever since, and popular forces, who have been displaced. With the oldest Marxist guerrilla force (FARC) on the continent, it is a country that devours its own children.

Venezuela is the most foreign of all South American countries, because the US is the largest buyer of its oil, which makes Venezuela a vassal state. Moreover, for more than half a century its political class — Social Democrats and Christian Socialists — have followed the dictates of international companies, rather than the needs of its own people. This class has ignored the fact that "Venezuela is like a geopolitical cogwheel between the Caribbean, the Amazon and the Andes, and it has an exceptional geopolitical advantage. On the Caribbean front, Venezuela borders on the North with the Dominican Republic, the US, Puerto Rico, and the Netherlands; it borders on the Caribbean with France, i.e., the so-called overseas territories. All this makes for an extremely interesting geopolitical configuration. Venezuela belongs to the great Amazon basin (seven million square kilometers), which are inter-connected not only through the jungle,

22. The Common Market of the South, or *Mercosur*, was born with a 1986 treaty, which established a free trade zone and a common monetary unit between Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. Bolivia and Chile participate as associate members. In 2003, Venezuela was admitted as a full member. In addition, common identity documents were established for the various citizens of participating countries.

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but also through the great rivers. Thus, the Orinoco joins the Amazon in a huge navigable artery in South America, "one of the greatest riches the planet has in terms of waterways, biodiversity, and reserves for human life."[23]

Paraguay and Uruguay shift between Brazil and Argentina, according to their own interests. Here, Chile is not relevant. It has always refused to be part of South American destiny. Finally, there are offensive moral and political scandals: formally independent republics like Surinam (a bastard nation-state created by civilized Holland); Guyana, a British dependency populated by 800,000 pariahs brought by England from all corners of the world (Hindus, Chinese, Mongols, Africans), i.e., a linguistic Babel that complicates basic daily interactions; and the prison of French Guyana — a last resort of European colonialism that refuses to die. None of these countries have participated in the socio-political history of South America, and will not do so until they cease to be mere appendages of Europe.

The "Rhombus theory"[24] is a new strategy to deal with this predicament. It consists of the partial replacement of ancient lines of strategic continental tension, and an alternative already adopted by the Mexican government through ALCA (*Area de Libre Comercio de las Americas*) and the effective subordination of all the governments of Central America and the Caribbean (except Cuba) to North American power. From the standpoint of political realism, so-called "*latinoamericanismo*" should be ignored, not only because it is abstract and universalist, but also because it is inadequate in developing a common strategy for Indian-Iberian peoples. Today, to talk of Latin America is geopolitical nonsense, because it is untenable and implausible. It is a category without roots or substance. Political realism does not deny the participation of other South American peoples. They will be included if and when they abandon their present governments' politics of surrender and subordination.

The most illustrious advocate of this new strategy was Juan Perón, who in a private conference at the Argentine National Military School in November 1953 proposed the creation of an area of free commerce among Argentina, Brazil, and Chile called ABC. Apparently those in power did not like the idea, since Getulio Vargas ended up committing suicide (1954), Ibáñez del Campo was ostracized, and Perón was exiled two years later.

Political action requires three elements: men, means, and events. South America has men: large numbers of starving people and hundreds of leaders displaced

23. Hugo Chávez, "Visión estratégica de Venezuela," a conference at the Escuela Diplomática in Madrid (May 5, 2002).

24. The theory was expounded by the union leader Horacio Ghilini, who collaborated with Julio Piumato and Juan Carlos Schmid on various subjects. The Rhombus theory received its name from the geometric figure formed by the lines connecting the vertices: Brasilia, Buenos Aires, Lima and Caracas. They support the creation of an extended Mercosur, i.e., a large, economically self-contained space bordering on two oceans. Access to the Pacific and the Atlantic will define a space of 18 million square kilometers, i.e., twice as large as Europe or the US, with a population of 430 million.

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from power by professional politicians. It has means: not the mass media, but the walls of its cities and of closed factories. It has events: in Venezuela, Hugo Chávez is finally in power after 40 years of democratic dictatorship by the social democrats and the social Christians; in Brazil, the Foro de Porto Alegre shook the "one world" of Davos and all the interests it represents; in Peru, Fujimora fled to his native Japan, leaving behind national and popular unrest; in Argentina, the failure of De la Rúa could not have been greater, with 20% unemployment and financial default.

With the Buenos Aires-Lima-Caracas-Brasilia axis defining the new South American strategy, the Rhombus theory prefigures the creation of a *Großraum* with access to both the Atlantic and the Pacific. It would be the culmination of Mercosur and the Andean Pact. This *Großraum* would be determined both by basic production and by the technological complementarity that the countries already share. Argentina has always stood out in the production of meats and grains (the 2000-2001 harvest alone reached 67 million tons), and in the last decades has had nuclear energy. Brazil excels in weapons technology and submarines, as well as in medicine, computers, and processed foods. Peru excels in fishing; Bolivia, in mining; Equador, in pharmaceutical technology; Venezuela, in oil and all that it conveys; Paraguay, in horticultural capacity, based on flowers and fruits. The productive and technological capacities with which all these South American countries complement each other guarantees autonomy, and makes it possible to break their dependency on other world markets.

Most South American people live on the coasts where, with the exception of Brasilia, the most important cities are located. The hinterland, which comprises the Amazon, the Orinoco, and the Dela Plata, is almost the size of the continental US. This enormous territory, which defines the Rhombus theory, is virtually unpopulated, which generates ambitions for conquest by hegemonic powers through theories like "limited sovereignty" or concrete actions. As Adolfo Koutoudjian put it, in a comparison of Asia or Africa, "what is striking is the enormous central vacuum. This is the biggest unresolved matter of South American geopolitics. This situation implies a great geopolitical and economic challenge for the realization of possibilities and development for South American parties. The 'El Dorado' could very well be in the middle of the continent."[25]

This South American heartland produces 30% of the world's fresh water, and guarantees huge hydroelectric resources. It holds the third place of the world's reserves of large-leaf forests. But, after five centuries, South America fluvial connections, which were used in the 15th century by Spanish conquerors, are in terrible condition. The fluvial routes between the Orinoco, the Amazon, and the Dela Plata allows navigation from Buenos Aires to Caracas, while from East to West there are at least three interoceanic connections. North-South navigation is possible through the Orinono, the Casiquiare, the Negro, the Amazonas,

25. Adolfo Koutoudjian, "Geopolítica sudamericana," in *Octubre sudamericano* (Dec. 2000).

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the Medeira, the Mamoré, the Guaporé, the Paraguay, the Paraná, and the Dela Plata. The Paraguay-Guaporé connection was realized through its respective tributaries — the Aguapé and the Alegre — and by crossing the Rebeca lagoon and the Barbados stream.[26] River transport consumes three-times less energy than railroad and seven-times less than road transportation, which will ostensibly reduce pollution. River transportation also saves energy and reduces the number of trips. Thus, this kind of transportation would allow for the formation of an economic space, amplifying Mercosur and the Andean Pact.

The Lima-Caracas axis is fundamental for Brazil's particular strategy, because it undermines international interference in the Amazon. But the Colombia plan to combat narco-terrorism with the help of North American troops is intervention. Under the pretext of protecting the region, European power-centers, especially northern ones, have sought to limit Brazilian sovereignty over the Amazon. Here, US ambitions are clear. President Bush junior has even suggested that countries with debts with the US could exchange them for their tropical forests. After all, as he put it: "Contrary to what Brazilians think, the Amazon is not theirs, but belongs to everyone."[27] A Caracas-Brasilia axis[28] would allow Hugo Chavez to consolidate power, because it would counterbalance Cuban influence in his government. This influence generates strikes and protests, financed by the centers of world power that see this influence as a danger to their interests. Thus, Brazil and Argentina are forced to double their efforts to persuade Venezuela and Peru. The consolidation of this axis is of vital importance in the construction of a great South American *Großraum*.[29] In this sense, just as the US seeks ways to prevent the consolidation of the European Union by extending NATO to the East, permanently incorporating nations that will make the European Union impossible, so it tries to extend the free market all the way to Antarctica, thereby absorbing all of South and Central America.

To hold back the US and the prospect of "one world," the new South American

26. This is narrated by the Georgescu brothers in *Los ríos de la integración suramericana* (Caracas, 1984), and demonstrates that fluvial traffic between Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina is possible, and can be realized with minimal efforts.

27. See "La amazonia nuestra," in *Cuadernos para la Emancipación* 23 (November 2001), p. 61.

28. The Brasilia-Buenos Aires axis was described by Garcia Calderon almost a century ago, when he prophetically argued that: "Brazil and Argentina together make up 80% of South American commerce. Situated on the Atlantic, the civilizing ocean, they are the necessary channels of Western culture for the New World." See Francisco García Calderón, *La Creación de un Continente* (Caracas: Biblioteca de Ayacucho, 1978), p. 305.

29. As Helio Jaguaribe put it in a recent interview: "If we do not achieve the consolidation of Mercosur and the construction of an area of free commerce in South America through an appropriate pact between ourselves and the Andean Pact, we are condemned to be absorbed by someone else in 2005. The moment ALCA is constituted, we will lose our sovereignty and become dependent on forces outside of ourselves." See Helio Jaguaribe, "Reportaje en revista 'Linea'," Buenos Aires (October 2000).

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strategy proposes the creation of a "bridge with the European Union," particularly with those nations — Spain, Portugal, Italy, and France — that are close to South America in terms of cultural ties and the immense investments that firmly tie them to the destiny of South America, if only to protect them. However, the strategy must not be over this "bridge to Europe," but rather concerning the Antartic Treaty, which must project it toward Antarctica in order to participate in discussions about the continent in the 21st century. This strategy must be extended toward the nations of Atlantic Africa — Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and Angola — which share this vision. This would allow the transformation of the South Atlantic into a kind of *Mare Nostrum*, in the same way that the Mediterranean was for Europeans in antiquity.

Proposing this new strategy from the organized Argentinean working class movement, which is opposed to the existing neo-liberal order and its political economic model of exclusion of most people in the participation of decisions that affect their destiny, is one more sign of the decisive change on the horizon. Argentina's politicians have lost all credibility and prestige, because of political oligarchies that usurp power for their own benefit. The candidates are always the same, and the ministries are not in a position to resolve foreign policy issues, especially the "no-conflict" policy advanced by Alfonsín and Menem's "carnal relations with the US."

On Latin America — an Exchange

Paul Piccone, Alberto Buela and Antonio Burr

Dear Alberto:

1) Schmitt's concept of the *Großraum* may very well be obsolete, after the collapse of the USSR and the failure of the EU to organize itself politically and militarily. It may also be obsolete because, with the possible exception of Islam, there is no radical alternative political organization opposed to market capitalism (and Islam, a pre-modern system with absolutely no chance to modernize, provides no alternative whatsoever). The project of establishing the kind of South American *Großraum* that you propose seems very problematic, since it is impossible to break with the global economic world system — especially for underdeveloped countries in dire need of American technology and financial networks. The model that seems much more promising these days is the one followed earlier

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Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea (and now by India), rather than seeking to break with the world system.

2) Bush does not advocate a single government, as you claim. In fact, he is becoming increasingly opposed to the UN precisely because it prefigures such a system. Today, domination is guaranteed primarily by economic, financial, and military power, with no need of a useless and cumbersome world government as the UN pretends to be. The US today will not tolerate challenges to its power, which break with the predominant rules and regulations (despite the fact that, in cases such as "free trade," the US has not been too consistent, opportunistically imposing tariffs and paying huge subsidies whenever deemed necessary for domestic political reasons). It is unclear how Latin American economies can function independently of international trade and financial dependence on the US.

3) The Lady of Guadalupe may be a great religious symbol, but it is totally useless in unifying any *Grossraum* along political, economic, and military lines. Today, consumerism trumps any other alternative, and cannot be displaced by abstract religious symbols. More important are traditions, which go back much longer than the past four centuries, and include not only Europe, but North America as well. South America shares these traditions with the US and Canada, as well as Europe. To contrapose South America to North America may very well be a useless effort.

4) To assume that Hugo Chavez (and Castro) can provide any alternative to market capitalism is madness. Both regimes are likely to disappear in the very near future, after both Venezuela and Cuba realize the impossibility of development outside of global market capitalism.

5) To attempt to develop a transportation network based on waterways is an anachronism, which has no chance whatsoever of succeeding. New York State, in the early part of the 19th century, developed precisely such a system — an excellent one at that — only to be displaced in the latter part of the century by railroads and highway systems. For South America to dream about developing and relying entirely on such a system would be sheer folly. Anyway, there do not seem to be too many enterprises (or governments) interested in such projects, for very good reason.

6) The prospects of developing any bridges between the EU and South America as an alternative to integration into the existing world system are practically zero. The EU is about to break up, with Spain, Italy and East European countries unwilling to accept French and German domination when they can get an immensely better deal with the US and Canada.

7) The organized Argentinean workers movement cannot buy into any of the above projects without encouraging more Third World status. While necessary to stabilize wages and profit, labor unions can only play a "progressive" role by accepting the international world order and integrating South American countries in the world economy. Otherwise it will degenerate into reactionary forces, as has happened in the US, Italy, Germany and elsewhere, where they have become major

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obstacles to improving collective well-being and rationalizing the political system.

8) Even if "oppositional" leaders manage to gain power in Latin American countries, they can only succeed by integrating with the global market system and preventing the US from opportunistically breaking its own rules, such as imposing trade tariffs and subsidizing domestic interests. This is precisely the kind of strategy now being developed by the representatives of Third World countries, which led to the collapse of the last international economic meeting.

Best Regards,

Paul Piccone

Dear Paul:

The idea of the construction of a Latin American *Großraum* — a Great South American Space such as we propose — does not come from Schmitt, but from our founding fathers, Simon Bolivar and José de San Martín. Rather than a *Großraum*, we refer to a cultural unity, in addition to the six or seven that constitute this universe which we call world, but in reality is better termed a *pluriverse*. With its creation we do not pretend to break with the global economic world system, as you say, but rather we propose the construction of a great self-centered space that could take advantage of the folds in the fabric of a world economy that becomes more totalitarian everyday.

1. It is true, as you say, that Bush does not advocate a single government. However, a global government functions in a sphere that is not exclusively guided by the US government. This world government is constituted by indirect powers, every day more blatantly obvious and apparent. The last conference of Durban on racism demonstrated that there are powers superior to the US.

2. I do not pretend that Latin American economies can function independently of international trade and the American economy, but that other sources of financial support exist beyond the US.

3. With regard to Our Lady of Guadelupe as an emblematic symbol of Hispanic-American religiosity and its political function, I can only remind you of President T. Roosevelt's 1912 comment, when he visited the South of Argentina guided by Francisco Moreno. At the shores of Lake Nahuel Huapi, under the shade of a tree that was preserved as a historical landmark, Moreno asked him how long would it be before the US assimilated Latin America. to which Roosevelt replied: "When it stops being Catholic." With regard to the "more important traditions which go back much longer than the past for centuries, and include not only Europe, but North America as well"; these are dead traditions, studied by cultural anthropology and archaeology, but no longer alive in the soul of our people. As Chilean sociologist Pedro Morandé claims, it is noteworthy that none of the indigenous rebellions of the time succeeded in reinstating the solar cult, ritual sacrifices or priest-led statehood. They did preserve the cult of

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the dead, devotion to Mother Earth (Pachamama), etc. Trying to resuscitate the pre-Christian past as a live fact reminds me of an anecdote in which Chesterton was asked about the nakedness of prehistoric man. "Of course," he replied, "because they have not yet found his stone underpants."

4. What we claim is that Hugo Chávez attempts alternatives within the capitalist market. He has recently proposed the creation of a South American oil company with the participation of our ten nations. In reality, our theory consists of taking advantage of the folds, *les biais*, that capitalism offers in the global market. We do not propose to eliminate it because that would presuppose a lack of political realism that we both agree in condemning.

5. It is not an anachronism to attempt to develop a web of fluvial transports for a large region such as South America, twice the size of the American territory. What is a mistake is to compare the small area of the state of New York with the millions of square kilometers of South America, which already counts with 50,000 navigable rivers.

With regard to your claim that "anyway there are not many enterprises (or governments) too interested in such projects," permit me to inform you that there are already various projects of canalization for large ships such as the Paraguay-Paraná waterway. Currently, it runs through 3342 kilometers, from the port of Cáceres in the heart of the Brazilian Matto Grosso, through Paraguay and Argentina and to the Uruguayan port of Nueva Palmira. If a transportation network based on waterways were an anachronism, Europe would have already dismantled its own operation in the Danube and its tributaries, which are still used to sail from the Black Sea to the Atlantic.

6. In a recent study, the Economic Institute of Sao Paulo (Brazil) has shown that, because of its complementary qualities with the European Union, Mercosur (common market among by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, to which Chile, Bolivia and Venezuela are associated) would grow 63.4% if it became associated with it. However, such an association with the ALCA project (Free Commerce Association for the Americas), led by the US, would only lead to 0.8% growth.

7. With regard to your comments that the organized Argentinean workers movement cannot support any of the above mentioned projects, because that would only bring them closer to Third World status, I would reply that Argentinean workers are already in the Third World, if we consider their salaries and quality of life. In addition, the theory of the Rhombus that contemplates the integration of the vertices of Buenos Aires, Lima, Caracas and Brasilia has been proposed by the CGT, dissident of Argentina in the Second World Forum of Porto Alegre (Brazil).

8. Contrary to your opinion, opposition leaders do not succeed by integrating in the system of the global market because they have done that already without positive results. It is also done by leaders of the parties that represent the current *status quo*, such as Sanchez de Lozada in Bolivia, Lucio Gutierrez in Ecuador, Alvaro Uribe in Colombia, and Jorge Batalle in Uruaguay, as well as in the past

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by Carlos Menem in Argentina or Fernando Henrique Cardozo in Brazil. There is only one option open to the opposition leaders against the current global market system, and that is "to work on the basis of what exists and take advantage of any favorable fold in the fabric of the system since one cannot go against it *en masse*." Neither Lula in Brazil, Kirchner in Argentina, Chavez in Venezuela, nor Lagos in Chile are openly against the system, yet they have not bought the formula offered by the US, which is none other than the theory of "*aggiornada*" security of the 1960's, together with the intervention of the corresponding national armies in the resolution of the internal problems. Clear evidence is found in the case of Colombia, the excuse of the war against drug trafficking and the recent forum for the defense of the Americas in Mexico.

Enough for now. Please consider this response and try to modify your objections. If that is not possible, you could publish both your objections and my response.

Cordially,
Alberto Buela

Dear Paul:

I have read Alberto Buela' article and your epistolary exchange, and I am not altogether convinced by some of Buela's claims. He is right in arguing that Latin American unity remains the ultimate objective, and this has been so since the time of independence. To the extent that Buela articulates this objective by presenting a new view of unity, which today may be utopian, at least he suggests that there are different ways of thinking about the old problem, in marked contrast to the chronic hopelessness the continent is mired in. Simon Bolivar believed that the only way out for the continent was to create continent-wide institutions, eliminate boundaries, have a common political front. Without unity, Latin America remains an agglomeration of small, ineffectual, disparate countries with no great political weight on the world stage, with the exception of Brasil and Mexico which, because of their size and population, have found a place among the more important countries.

It is clear today that there will not be, and it is not desirable to have, any political unity as the result of a continent-wide revolution, or through dramatic breaks with the past. The domination of finance capital, and the IMF-inspired world market orientation of the local economies is too well established for any radical changes to occur, except maybe in places like Bolivia and Ecuador, where local Indian populations are starting to flex their muscle in unexpected ways. The worldview of these indigenous groups, however, seems stuck in the late 15th or early 16th century. At any rate, it is evident that the elites and the managerial classes in the more developed parts of the continent will not allow any grand experiments that threaten the status quo, no matter what the cost in chronic poverty and marginalization. Past experience shows where populist experiments have ended up.

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In fact, the only continent-wide revolutionary movements that have succeeded were the early 19th century wars of independence. Since then, Latin America has been a land of broken dreams and massive exploitation. Wealthy countries such as Peru, Colombia, Bolivia and Venezuela seem to have been cursed by their very wealth, which has mostly gone to fill the coffers of rich metropolitan countries. Independence did not eliminate feudalism in the form of land tenure and indentured servitude until well into the 1960s. Today, of course, there are other more subtle forms of inequality and marginalization, but are as difficult to overcome, and the gap grows ever wider. Bolivar was a giant, but even he, towards the end of his life, had to recognize that uniting Latin America politically was as fruitless as "plowing in the sea." San Martin was a European-style Argentine general; he commanded armies with discipline and strategy, but once the Independence Wars were won, he left for Paris and never came back. He must have known better than to attempt a political project of his own.

Although Latin American unity remains everyone's ideal, it is not possible any longer (if ever) to understand Latin America politically simply as a continent. Each country has become vastly different from all others, and now has its own endemic problems. Buela ignores all this in order to elaborate a grand scheme. But it is now clear that in order to think about unity it is necessary to think about small pragmatic steps, and not vast, all-encompassing ideals, for this results once again in a sense of doom and oppression. Buela does not acknowledge either particular idiosyncrasies or the economic and cultural wars that go on in Latin America.

Some of today's more interesting developments are the indigenous populations' rejection of globalization in Bolivia and Ecuador, and the fact they have taken to heart the lesson that no matter what their resources, and the promises of white-led political elites, they will end up as poor as they have ever been. The elites and the media do not venerate Latin America as a cultural ideal. Their gaze is elsewhere, usually toward the North. The Virgin of Guadalupe is a working class icon, not something likely to inspire anyone beyond the religiously pious. The continent is too secular and too divided to simply expect one of its cultural products, no matter how venerable, to inspire an all-encompassing political process. Today, the only icon that seems to unite Latin America is the Brazilian national soccer team!

On the positive side, all Latin American countries (including Brasil), have a common heritage, which is an integral part of the continent, despite obvious differences (the fact that its people speak Portuguese and are Luso-Americans makes no difference to the rest of Spanish-speaking Latin America). When it comes to a Latin American union the historical problem has been that since Bolivar's time the emphasis has been on political unity. This project has gone nowhere, because each country has had its own political specificities that set them apart from the rest. Furthermore, they all have different forms of government, and the levels of political development have been uneven. The ideal of political unity has also been co-opted by the US, first through the Pan-American

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Union in the early 1950s, and later by the Organization of American States (OAS). The US has used the OAS to achieve its own objectives in the region, i.e., fighting communist insurgencies and Left-leaning populisms, and has not promoted unity among Latin Americans, except as a reaction against the US. While Latin-Americans always thought they would eventually benefit from their alliance with the US, it is now clear that this has come to naught. Wide-spread disillusion with the US and "anti-Americanism," which has spread like wild fire since the end of US-supported military dictatorships, is making the idea of unity increasingly desirable. In short, anti-Americanism is currently resulting in a growing interest in Latin-American identity and the idea of union, with more self-sufficiency, more self-determination, and less dependency.

Another factor discouraging Latin-American political unity is geography. The Andean range divides those who live on the Pacific coast from those in the Highlands, or in the Amazon basin. The south Cone countries are more racially homogenous than the rest, and the huge distances between the various countries create almost insurmountable obstacles that keep them apart. Furthermore, in terms of political unity, since Bolivar there has been no leader who could have articulated Latin America's collective yearnings and some unification project. Fidel came closest, but everyone knows what happened to Fidel's and Che's "Continental Revolution." To be sure, today there is a more pragmatic approach to this matter. Since the return of democracy to Latin America in the 1990s, there has been a revival of the ideal of unity, or at least the idea that all Latin American countries have shared interests and objectives. However, the emphasis is no longer so much on the political aspects of this unity, but on the economy, i.e., commerce, tariffs, and trade. Latin America has been experimenting unsuccessfully with commercial integration since the 1960s. This is due to differences in levels of development and divergent economic interests. Yet, it is acknowledged that integration is necessary, no matter how long it takes, or how difficult it will be. The institutions that have been created, such as ALALC, the Andean Group, and Mercosur, have remained viable, but still need fine-tuning. Free trade agreements and the US-sponsored free-trade zone of the Americas presents new challenges, but it is clear that commerce and economic issues have to be dealt with first, before seeking any kind of political unity.

There is also a consensus concerning the obsolescence of socialism, i.e., state-sponsored economic development with central planning and state control over the means of production. It is now clear that private property, private capital, and private enterprise are the best means to create wealth. However, the manner in which wealth is distributed, and the role of government in dealing with the existing inequalities remain crucial issues. Of course, the vast differences in income distribution and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few remains a scandal of continental proportion. Political leaders and even economic elites recognize that these vast differences in income and opportunity, which create

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millions of poor and marginalized, undermine the possibility of long term stability. Latin Americans all agree that responsible governments cannot have a "hands-off" policy concerning the daily drama of millions of their own people. They acknowledge their role in regulating economic activity and promoting development in order to reduce poverty, provide services, and improve living standards. Countries such as post-1990 Chile have been more successful than others in reducing poverty, and others, such as Brazil under Lula, Argentina under Kirshner, and Venezuela under Chavez, are now committed to similar projects. While the political elites will no longer tolerate extreme forms of populism or socialist-Marxist projects that threaten the *status quo*, even the most conservative among them recognize that the ever-increasing gap between rich and poor, and the ever increasing marginalization of vast segments of the population conspire against stability and the so-called "business climate."

Despite of the influence of Northern and "world culture," Latin Americans are united by many symbols and experiences. Given the in-roads Protestant Churches have made in the last 20 years, Catholicism no longer has a monopoly of religion, although most people still share a common Catholic heritage. Culturally, soccer, television, and Latin American soap operas seem to be the best equalizers. No matter whether they are produced in Mexico, Brasil or elsewhere, soap operas cross social boundaries to depict the sentiments and social realities of all Latin Americans everywhere. The unifying cultural impact of these "telenovelas" is yet to be fully understood, but they are clearly providing the common language and the common feelings that Latin Americans identify with as part of a common identity. Latin Americans also define themselves in terms of common sensibilities, in contradistinction to "others," i.e., the North American "gringos," or the Europeans. These common sensibilities set Latin Americans apart from the somewhat clumsy, wealthy, and "over-fed" citizen of the developed world, who despite their wealth and safety, lack the wit and wherewithal of the poor to survive under adverse conditions. Latin American's fatalism has to do with the recognition that life is an ethereal, mysterious affair, and no matter how much wealth one has, it is impossible to control fully one's destiny or anyone else's.

While it is unlikely that Latin American unity can be realized very soon, the ideal will remain. As with Europeans, who know that their power is in their union, Latin Americans realize that whatever the future may bring, there is no advantage in remaining divided and dependent. If there is some economic integration, projects for political union will quickly follow. With the advent of democracy on the continent it is even possible to think that a Latin American Parliament could eventually become a reality.

Regards,
Antonio Burr

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Plato: Utopian or Physician?

Daniel R. Gandy-Jordan

Hodges' and Pynes' startling reinterpretation of Plato's *Republic*[1] contradicts everything that scholars have believed about the *Republic* for 2400 years. According to them, the *Republic* is not about Plato's real utopia, but about the sick city-states of ancient Greece, which needed guardians and philosopher kings to bring their social illness under control. Plato's true utopian city is quite different, without classes and luxuries, without war and slaves, but with communism for the masses.

How can 2400 years of scholarly interpretation be wrong? Hodges and Pynes provide give an element of the answer by mentioning that Aristotle started everyone off on the wrong track of Plato interpretation, because for millennia his authority was awesome. They also mention the Socratic irony. Plato's irony about the ideal city in *Republic* has suffered from centuries of misunderstanding.

For two millennia there has been a tendency for Western civilization to idealize ancient Greece. That is because most of what is known about Greece is what the Athenian aristocratic class thought. But what did the slaves think of Athens? What did the Greek proletariat that rowed in the Athenian fleet think? What did the women of Athens think? What did the foreign "metic class" that lived in the Athenian city-state think? What did the 150 Greek city-states trapped in the Athenian empire think? What did the Spartans think? What did the enslaved boys living in the Athenian brothels think? What did the surrounding peoples think of Greece — the Macedonians, the peoples of Asia Minor, the tribes around the Black Sea? What the aristocrats have done, at least in philosophy, is to pretty much ignore the social, political and economic reality of ancient Greece. The Greeks considered themselves to be a superior race and tried to enslave the peoples around them. But they also often killed Greek men in a conquered city-state and sold the women and children into slavery. The Greeks enslaved everybody they could get their hands on, even one another. As for the surrounding "barbarians," they were considered to be racially inferior. As Aristotle puts it in *Politics*, since they do not want to be slaves they must be forced.

The surrounding peoples looked upon the Greeks with fear and hatred. Athenian power and glory were based on the coinage taken from the silver mines of Laurion, where for a century tens of thousands of slaves were slowly worked to death. In Greek purdah, women were not allowed to go to school. They were sec-

1. Donald C. Hodges and Christopher A. Pyne, "Plato's Republic: A Tale of Two Cities," in *Telos* 123 (Spring 2002), pp.175-182.

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ond class citizens who could not vote. They were assigned to the women's quarters in the back of the house with the slaves. The reason why homosexuality flourished in ancient Greece was that it was difficult to have a relation with an illiterate Greek woman. The Greeks were great sportsmen, always practicing for warfare against enemy city-states. In the Peloponnesian War ancient Greece tore itself to pieces. Classical Greece arose in the 6th century BC, flamed across the historical sky in the 5th, and committed suicide in the Peloponnesian War. Athens was an impregnable walled port opening onto its sea empire, while the Spartans ravaged the land of Attica full of olive orchards as far as the eye could see.

Even worse was the class war raging inside each city-state. Here is what Thucydides had to say: "Practically the whole of the Hellenic world was convulsed. . . Leaders of the parties in the cities had programs which appeared admirable — on one side political equality for the masses, on the other the safe and sound government of the aristocracy — but in professing to serve the public interest they were seeking to win the prize for themselves. . . Family relations were a weaker tie than party membership. These parties were not formed to enjoy the benefits of the established laws, but to acquire power by overthrowing the existing regime. . . As for ending this state of affairs, no guarantee could be given that would be trusted, no oath sworn that people would fear to break. . . So revolutions broke out in city after city, and in places where the revolutions occurred late the knowledge of what had happened previously in other places caused still new extravagances of revolutionary zeal, expressed by an elaboration in the methods of seizing power and by un-heard of atrocities in revenge." Thucydides describes the uprising of the democrats in Corcym as follows: "The democrats seized upon all their enemies they could find and put them to death. Next they went to the temple of Hera and persuaded about fifty of the suppliants there to submit to a trail. They then condemned every one of them to death. Seeing what was happening, most of the other suppliants, who had refused to be tried, killed each other there in the temple; some hanged themselves from the trees, and others found various other means of committing suicide. During the sixty days that the Athenians stayed there with sixty ships (supporting the revolution) the Corcyreans continued to massacre those of their own citizens whom they considered to be their enemies. Their victims were accused of conspiring to overthrow the democracy, but in fact men were often killed on grounds of personal hatred or else by their debtors because of the money they owed. There was death in every shape and form." Thucydides assures us that this was a moderate revolution, those that came later were so hideous that his pen failed him (Book Three: V).

Socrates says in the *Republic* (IV: 421-422): "Here is a discovery of new evils against which the guardians will have to watch or they will creep into the city unobserved." Adeimantus: "What evils?" "Wealth and poverty. Wealth is the parent of luxury and laziness. Poverty is the parent of meanness and viciousness. Both are the parent of discontent. . . . Any city, however small, is in fact divided

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into two; one the city of the poor, the other of the rich. These are at war with one another." In the *Republic*, Plato does not mention slaves when he is talking about his workers, guardians, and philosopher-kings. But like everyone in the ancient world, he thought that humans were divided into slaves and free. In the *Republic* (V:469) the discussion shows that Plato assumed that defeated enemies of his city of guardians would be enslaved. If he does not mention slavery, it is because he is not mentioning the obvious. During the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta, the Athenians sailed up to the island of Melos with a gigantic army and gave that city-state an ultimatum: capitulate or be conquered. The Melians refused to submit, stating their neutrality in the Peloponnesian War and declaring that they wanted friendly relations with Athens — but as a free people. The Athenians answered: "If we were on friendly terms with you, our subjects would regard that as a sign of weakness in us, whereas your hatred is evidence of our power." The Melians said: "In our view it is at any rate useful that you should not destroy a principle that is to the good of all men — namely, that in the case of all who fall into danger there should be such a thing as fair play and just dealing." The Athenians: "By conquering you we shall increase not only the size but the security of our empire. We rule the sea and you are islanders, and weaker islanders too than the others; it is therefore particularly important that you should not escape." The Melians: "Is it not certain that you will make enemies of all states who are at present neutral when they see what is happening here and naturally conclude that in course of time you will attack them too? Does not this mean that you are strengthening the enemies you have already and are forcing others to become your enemies even against their intentions and inclinations?'

Tiny Melos refused to surrender and said: "In war fortune sometimes makes the odds more level than could be expected from the difference in numbers of the two sides. And if we surrender, then all our hope is lost at once, whereas, so long as we remain in action, there is still a hope that we may yet stand upright." So the Athenian horde attacked. The islanders fought back. Melos collapsed. Then the Athenian victors put to death all the men of military age and sold the women and children as slaves. Melos vanished from history, leaving only the statue of the goddess of love — Aphrodite. (Thucydides, end of Book Five). The 150 city-states in the Agean Empire looked upon Athens as the Arabs see Washington.

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The Unity of the Platonic City

Adrian Pabst

Donald C. Hodges and Christopher A. Pynes dismiss Catherine Pickstock's interpretation of justice and prudence as two ordering principles of the city in Plato.[1] They contend that the *Republic* features not one, but two cities, that Plato's account in the *Republic* varies substantially from that in the *Statesman* and the *Laws*, and that Plato's main interlocutor (and, ultimately, opponent) is Socrates — not Aristotle. Under the postmodern imperative of being "fair to the text,"[2] they then proceed to outline what they believe to be the true story of the *Republic* — a "Tale of Two Cities": Socrates' more genuinely communist and "frugal" *Republic* vs. Plato's decadent, aristocratic and potentially tyrannical second-best city.

Accusing Pickstock of taking "too much for granted, i.e., the existence of a single and uniform Platonic City," they argue that Plato separates the ideal from the real city and that his account of the ideal city in the *Republic* is significantly different from the one in the *Statesman* and in the *Laws*, because — against Pickstock — the guardians are no longer instrumental to Plato's concept of justice in the latter two dialogues. Evidence for this is the fact that the *Statesman* and the *Laws* are posterior to the *Republic*.

Allegedly, the difference between the ideal and the real city rests on the difference between Socrates' and Plato's concepts — not Plato's and Aristotle's. This is because for Hodges and Pynes the two cities in the *Republic* — rather than Pickstock's one Platonic city — as well as the difference between cities in the *Republic* and in the later dialogues, all go back to the profound opposition between Plato and Socrates — not Plato and Aristotle. So, the quest for the Platonic City becomes "the quest for the historical Socrates."

This reading misses Pickstock's point. Most Plato scholars agree that the quest for the historical Socrates and for the alleged opposition between Plato and Socrates is an illusory undertaking. As Kenneth Sayre put it: "For Socrates, as Plato portrayed him, the love of wisdom was nurtured in conversation. Among the consequences of this understanding of philosophy are that philosophic growth is stimulated by teachers who guide rather than instruct, and that philosophic achievement is more a matter of discernment than of argument and counterargument. Plato

1. Donald C. Hodges and Christopher A. Pynes, "Plato's *Republic*: A Tale of Two Cities," in *Telos* 123 (Spring 2002), pp. 175-182; Catherine Pickstock, "Justice and Prudence: Principles of Order in the Platonic City," in *Telos* 119 (Spring 2001), pp. 3-17.

2. Hodges and Pynes, "Plato's *Republic* . . . ," *op. cit.*, p. 176.

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retained this understanding of philosophy. Although the theory of recollection upon which at one time it may have been based did not survive the middle dialogues, and although Socrates was upstaged in most of the late dialogues by philosophically more powerful protagonists, the major dialogues of the later period (with the exception perhaps of the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*) were constructed to serve as dialectical instruments, rather than repositories of doctrine. For the interpreter of these dialogues, this means: (1) that Plato's philosophic beliefs cannot be culled directly from the remarks of any single character (major protagonists included), (2) that for the purpose of revealing Plato's thought the dialectical structure of a dialogue is no less important than its individual arguments, and (3) that the dramatic structure for this purpose may be comparably important."[3]

For Hodges and Pynes, Plato's portrait of Socrates is based on second-hand information and must therefore be corrected, if not replaced, by Xenophon's first-hand testimony in his *Memorabilia*. But this presumes that historically precise and textually verifiable knowledge of Plato's positions can be extracted from isolated arguments by individual characters in a single dialogue. This is an illusion.

Hodges' and Pynes' unqualified opposition of Plato to Socrates is not only textually unfounded, but also incompatible with the very form of both Socrates' and Plato's philosophy — the complex and aporetic interplay of dialogue, dialectics, and drama. In her reading, Pickstock integrates myths, rhetoric, narrative and, above all, ritual practices. She seeks to give more importance to these dimensions in Plato's thought by conceptualizing the meaning of discursive mediation (e.g., phronetic judgment and music), the relation of philosophy to religion, as well as the liturgical ordering of the city.[4] To which it could be added that mediation in Plato is not only discursive, but also phenomenal, in the sense that the Beautiful shines forth and makes itself known through sense perception and that truth is the discernible harmony of mind and things (e.g., the *Republic*, 486d). So understood, the Beautiful is coterminous with the Just and the Good, and therefore an integral part of any account of justice, since the latter is defined as harmonic blending of desire, force and reason (e.g., the *Republic* 443e). Just as the Beautiful and the Good are coterminous, so are knowledge, being, and action, since to know is to desire the good, and "the highest form of knowledge is knowledge of the form of the good" (the *Republic* 505a), which elevates being and compels one to pursue and perfect justice in the city.

Hodges' and Pynes' exclusive attention to isolated arguments entails a downgrading of both Socrates' and Plato's philosophy. It is as if they cannot see

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3. Kenneth Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology. A Riddle Resolved* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. ix.

4. Pickstock, "Justice and Prudence . . . ," *op. cit.*, p. 4; "Friendship and Philosophy in Plato," in *Telos* 123 (Spring 2002), pp. 47-48, 51-52; and "The Soul in Plato," in Deane-Peter Baker and Patrick Maxwell eds., *Explorations in Contemporary Continental Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Rodopi B. V., 2003), Ch. 8, pp. 115-126, esp. p. 122.

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the forest for the trees. Ultimately, this is because they seem to ignore that the part (one argument about the city) and the whole (Plato's account of the city) cannot be separated.[5] Conversely, to invoke isolated arguments as evidence for the validity of a sweeping statement such as the irreconcilable difference between Socrates and Plato is to misconstrue them. So Hodges' and Pynes' approach ends up missing not only the forest, but also the trees.

If there is no opposition between Plato and Socrates, then Hodges' and Pynes' other critique — that there are two cities, not one, and that Plato's account of the ideal and real city differs substantially over time (which derives from the first critique) — is also called into question. Indeed, if at all, then Plato in the *Republic* discusses not two, but three cities. The first is exposed in the *Republic* 368e-372d3. This city is at once metaphysical and historical. It lays down the two constitutive principles of each and every community, i.e., needs due to individual non-self-sufficiency (369b) and the potential communal benefits of pooling different naturally given aptitudes (369c, 370b). Far from being an abstract conception, this archetypical community is always inscribed in space and time, since it has a local and historical beginning and evolves across space and over time. This city contrasts not with the unhealthy *Vanity Fair* in Hodges' and Pynes' tale, but with the dualistic alternative introduced by Glaucon, who despises Socrates' city as "a community of pigs" and contrasts it with a supposedly civilized city of comfort and luxury. So, there is the first metaphysical-historical city, and there is the lower city of pigs *vs.* the higher city of civility.

What is the basis of this interpretation? Prior to Glaucon's intervention, there is only one city, not two. There is no separation of the real and the ideal, the unhealthy and the healthy, the inferior and the superior. The first city blends the metaphysical with the historical, and views the development of cities in terms of degrees, not absolutes. According to Socrates, no city is either simply primitive or wholly civilized, because nothing is static or absolute. Instead, each and every city constantly develops and becomes ever more complex, since all that *is* is dynamic and mediated. Glaucon's critique sets up the problem dualistically — the opposition of the "community of pigs" and the "city of civilization," as if there was some linear evolution from primitiveness to civility. It is also clear that the turn to comfort, luxury, and ultimately conflict is neither a metaphysical nor a historical inevitability, as good and evil are not on the same ontological plane: the good is inscribed in nature and has ontological substance, whereas evil is privation of the good and marks an ontological deficiency.

But does not Socrates acknowledge the truth of Glaucon's dualism? Is not the idealism of the first city denounced by the realism of the two cities? In other

5. See Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, *op. cit.*, p. ix: "Against the regrettable tendency of many contemporary commentators to concentrate their analytic attention on isolated arguments, we can reasonably hope to recover the philosophic contents of such a dialogue only by approaching it as a dialectical whole."

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words, is Socrates not compelled by the tale of Glaucon's two cities? Certainly not. No dualism, however complex, could ever account for why the good (or, for that matter, the evil) might be objectively more desirable. Glaucon's dualistic opposition never escapes the fatalism of a perpetual irresolvable (proto-Manichean) struggle between good and evil. In contrast, Socrates argues that all that *is* is good, not in, of, or by itself, but by virtue of participating in Being and Goodness. And so each and every actual city comes into existence and is good by virtue of being an instantiation of the first metaphysical-historical city. Far from being idealist, this account is eminently realist, because it explains at once that the actual neither has being nor goodness by itself, but only by participation, and that the good is not some arbitrary absolute, but an all-transcending reality that it discloses through mediations in the actual and is only knowable as such. This account of the world is widely shared by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

Indeed, in the *Republic*, as in later dialogues (as well as in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, *Ethics*, and *Politics*), the ideal and the real are shown to be inextricably intertwined. The ideal upholds and sustains the real, which is the instantiation of the ideal. Without the ideal, there is no real: nothing at all. Outside the real, there is no ideal and there can be no knowledge of it. The Platonic City describes just this aporetic and paradoxical relation. To say that each and every actual city conjoins the ideal and the real is also to say that it has the potential either to pursue and perfect its ideality and thereby to partake more intensely of Being and the Good (and, in that sense, to become more real) or to turn away from the ideal and thereby to deny Being and Goodness (and in that sense to be deprived of the real). The whole purpose of the *Republic* is to set out a strategy to direct each and every actual city toward the ideal so that it may participate more intensely in it and become ever more real.

This should make it clear why, in accusing Pickstock of taking "too much for granted, namely the existence of a single and uniform Platonic City," Hodges and Pynes miss the point. Her objective is to demonstrate that all dualities in Plato are qualified by a set of physical mediations, and that the Platonic City is equally non-dualistic as a result of being liturgically ordered. She re-reads Plato as arguing that the attainment of philosophical aims such as wisdom or goodness is only possible "by going beyond philosophy," since "Plato is not the proponent of a self-standing metaphysics," but of the "supra-philosophical place of religion . . . [which] comprises the necessity of public ritual practice for the attainment of wisdom, and, in addition, the mediations of myth and continuous individual and collective praise of the divine."[6]

Hodges' and Pynes' interpretation is blind to such mediations and to the possible unity of Plato's project in general and of the Platonic City in particular, because of their exclusive focus on isolated textual evidence. Of course, this

6. Pickstock, "Justice and Prudence . . . ," *op. cit.*, p. 4.

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blindness is hardly surprising. It follows directly from their undemonstrated assumption that in Plato there is an irreducible dualism that opposes the real to the ideal. Hodges and Pynes think they are stating the obvious when they write that "so presented, the fundamental choice in *Republic* is between a real city in which health and peace abound, and an ideal city, designed to overcome the vices of an unhealthy and corrupt one."[7] But what is portrayed as self-evident is nothing but an assertion that rests on no argument or any textual analysis, since the allegation that Plato's distinction between a healthy and an unhealthy city is sufficient proof for his dualism is not warranted by a reading of either the *Republic* or later dialogues such as the *Statesman* and the *Laws*.

If anything, the unity of the Platonic City only becomes stronger after the middle dialogues. In the conclusion of the *Statesman*, Plato re-invokes an earlier analogy between the art of weaving and the art of governing in order to illustrate the idea that governance within the city strives toward inclusiveness. "What we are saying, then, is that the work of a weaver-statesman is complete when he has woven these two types of human character — the courageous and the restrained — into a tight fabric. It is complete when a king with his knowledge makes sure that consensus and loyalty are the materials out of which he constructs their communal life, and so creates the most magnificent and excellent fabric there can be — a seamless cloth in which he enfolds all his subjects, whether slave or free — and when his rule, his government, is such that it maximizes to the fullest degree the potential a state has for attaining happiness" (*Statesman* 311b-c).

Similarly, in the *Laws*, toward the end of Book III, one of the aims of the lawgiver is "that the city be at unity with herself" (*Laws* 701c). The Platonic City's unity in difference is ultimately grounded in the idea that political power can only hope to pursue goodness if it combines individual well-being and communal welfare (e.g. *Republic* 369c, 420b-c, 428e, 466a, 519e-520a). So, if goodness and justice tie together the individual and the collective, then Plato's philosophy cannot be said to be either proto-Cartesian or proto-Hobbesian. The relation between the individual and the collective within the city has an ontological correlate — relationality. For Plato, there is no being in itself and as such. Instead, being only is, because it partakes of Being and Goodness, and perfects its being and justness in conjunction with other beings within the city.

In turn, this political and ontological tenet of Plato's thought has a crucial theological dimension. The idea that political rule is the pursuit of individual and communal justice and happiness is expressed in terms of the analogy with "pastoral rule" (e.g. *Statesman* 267d-268d, 275b-277a; *Laws* 702a-b). The "shepherding ideal," so prominent in the Old Testament (e.g. *Psalm* 23, Jeremiah 23, 1-4, Ezekiel 34), also underlies Plato's account of justice in the city. This confirms Pickstock's point about the place of religion in Plato's philosophy. It also extends

7. Hodges and Pynes, "Plato's *Republic op. cit.*, p. 175.

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her argument as to why "the merging of the Biblical and Platonic or Neoplatonic traditions seemed so natural, whereas too frequently modern commentaries have tended to assume they were pulling in opposed directions."[8] Far from entertaining any illusions about the uniformity of the Platonic tradition, only such a reading overcomes the lack of differentiation on the part of all those postmodern pundits who pass self-righteous judgment on the inadequacies of Plato's philosophy, oblivious to its profundity and complexities.

To be fair, Hodges and Pynes are not alone in overlooking some of the fundamental aspects of the Platonic City. Karl Popper famously — and so mistakenly — branded Plato the first totalitarian thinker in the history of Western philosophy.[9] And Michel Foucault, despite his brilliant re-reading of the history of Western political thought, in particular the idea that secularity has distinctly theological origins, maintains that Plato's version of the "political pastorate" privileges the collective over and above the individual, thereby opening up to co-optation by the centralizing, de-individuating, and homogenizing forces of the nation-station and its combined and mutually-complementary elements of *raison d'État*: what ultimately became the police force.[10] Needless to say, secularity in general and the modern nation-state in particular arose not from the sell-out of the "shepherding ideal," but from its turn to the non-teleological immanent order and to the autonomous self-sufficient individual Foucault has never ceased to celebrate.

This points to a wider problem — the catastrophic effects of the postmodern rewriting of history and the postmodern contamination of philosophy and theology. It is catastrophic, because in its present configuration postmodernism is nothing but a regression to some of the worst forms of modernism. Two of the most influential postmodern claims — Jean-François Lyotards' end of meta-narrative and Francis Fukuyama's end of history — epitomize this regression.[11] The alleged demise of all meta-narratives and the imperative to eliminate the remnants of modern metaphysical and political absolutism is a new meta-narrative in disguise — a mask of the exclusive and the absolute whose ugliness is becoming increasingly obvious. Needless to say, the proclamation of the end of history and of the new universality — the victory *sans appel* of liberal democracy and capitalism — is nothing but a certain Western liberal secular rhetoric whose professed tolerance does not extend to those who dare to disagree with it. In this world of metaphysical blindness, history is confined to texts, and historicity is reduced to literalist textual analysis. This rather impoverished view ends up losing its object,

8. Pickstock, 'Justice and Prudence . . .," *op. cit.*, p. 4.

9. Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies. Volume One: The Spell of Plato*, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 1966).

10. Michel Foucault, "*Omnes et singulatim*: vers une critique de la raison politique," in *Le Débat*, Vol. 41 (September-November 1986), pp. 5-35.

11. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: a Report on Knowledge*, tr. by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992).

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because the fixation on what is in the text disregards, if not the context, then almost certainly the wider argument and the assumptions that inform the text.

Curiously, but not unexpectedly, postmodernism is so obsessed with absence — of meta-narratives and of metaphysics — that it lapses into the idolatry of presence, in terms which are only seemingly paradoxical and aporetic. Even leading postmodern philosophers (-cum-theologians) are not immune from this. Thus, Derrida's deconstruction by *différance*, far from eschewing metaphysics or theology, constitutes a postmodernized negative theology about God's presence *as* absence.[12] Similarly, Jean-Luc Marion's deconstruction by *réduction*, which he portrays as a "theological pragmatic of absence (*pragmatique théologique de l'absence*),"[13] where God manifests Himself in the absence of any divine name and essence, is nothing but the same idea that God's absence somehow is his presence. Marion goes a long way to demonstrate that the only God is the God at a distance . . . only then to declare that this God is without being.[14]

So, postmodernism is nothing more than the same old ghosts lurking behind the kitsch logo of the new. There is more to the text than the text itself, not least because there is no text in itself and as such. On closer reading, the postmodern tale of absence *vs.* presence is out-narrated by the Platonic drama of aporia.

12. Jacques Derrida, *La voix et le phénomène* (Paris: PUF, 1967); "La différance," in his *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Ed. Minuit, 1972); and "Comment ne pas parler. Dénégations," in Jacques Derrida, *Psyché: inventions de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1998).

13. Jean-Luc Marion, *De surcroît. Etudes les phénomènes saturés* (Paris: PUF, 2001), p. 187.

14. Jean-Luc Marion, *The Idol and Distance. Five Studies*, tr. by Thomas A. Carlson (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001); and *God without Being*, tr. by Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

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